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ABSTRACT

This report discusses the obligation of colleges and universities to assume societal leadership embracing the challenges confronting American pluralism in order to deepen public awareness of America's history of diversity. An introductory chapter focuses on campus leadership in this field. Chapter 1 depicts higher education as a meeting ground for American pluralism, a subject to be debated during study-dialogues. Chapter 2 focuses on the connection between democracy and diversity and the tensions this creates within the context of pervasive issues of difference and inclusion. Chapter 3 looks at democracy and American pluralism with subsections on democracy as historical force, as political process, as universal aspiration, and as communal connections. Chapter 4 examines America's past failures with reference to the inequality inherent in diversity, particularly racial differences. Chapter 5 discusses the existence of borders existing in any community encompassing two or more cultures, races, or classes. It is concluded that higher education has a double obligation to create new opportunities, termed "American Commitments Community Seminars" for public and campus learning about the United States as a diverse democracy; and to commit its institutions to making campuses inclusive educational environments. (Contains 33 references.) (CK)

ED 398 781

The Drama of Diversity and Democracy

Higher Education and American Commitments

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This report is the first in a series that explores higher education's responsibilities within a diverse democracy. Written by members of a National Panel charged to examine American Commitments: Diversity, Democracy, and Liberal Learning, these reports have been shaped in extensive dialogue over the past two years with all parts of the higher education community.

Later reports in this series make specific recommendations about goals for liberal learning in a diverse democracy and about curricular, pedagogical, and institutional practices that establish diversity as a resource for excellence in American higher education. This report explores higher education's role in fostering the knowledge, principles, and capacities requisite to an inclusive, egalitarian democracy.

Cover Artwork:
(Clockwise from left): a weaving; a suffrage march in 1913; the Declaration of Independence; an engineering student from the University of Colorado–Boulder; and two of the Tuskegee Airmen, who as the first African Americans trained as U.S. military pilots served with great distinction.

THE DRAMA OF DIVERSITY AND DEMOCRACY

HIGHER EDUCATION AND AMERICAN COMMITMENTS

A REPORT PREPARED FOR
AMERICAN COMMITMENTS

A NATIONAL INITIATIVE OF THE
ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN COLLEGES
AND UNIVERSITIES

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments v

The American Commitments National Panel vii

Foreword: Higher Education and the Contradictions of American Pluralism ix

Synopsis xix

Introduction: Campus Leadership 1

I. Higher Education: A Meeting Ground for American Pluralism 5

II. Democracy and Diversity: Essential Connections 9

III. Democracy and American Pluralism 13

- Democracy as Historical Force 13
- Democracy as Political Process: An Ambiguous Legacy 15
- Democracy as Universal Aspiration 17
- Democracy as Communal Connections 18

IV. Diversity and Inequality: Democracy's Painful Failures 21

- Diversity as a Daily Challenge 21
- Diversity and Inequality 22
- Race as the Razor Edge of Democracy 24

V. Diversity and Community 29

- A New Vision 31

Recommendations: Higher Education's Double Obligation 35

- American Commitments Community Seminars 36
- Creating Inclusive Learning Environments 40

Works Cited 43

Photo Credits 45

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AAC&U owes an enormous debt of appreciation to the members of the National Panel who developed these papers and who have guided the American Commitments projects. Their creative collaboration and dedication set a high standard for any collective enterprise while their insight and understanding helped define an educational direction that will take colleges and universities well into the new century. All members of the Panel gave ten times as much time and energy to this work as AAC&U described for them at the outset, participating both in the many extended dialogues that generated this report and in the detailed revisions of successive drafts.

The analyses presented in this report were developed in a series of small group meetings involving members of the National Panel. Frank F. Wong, chair of the Panel, initially served as scribe for this report and wrote three earlier versions. Johnnella Butler, Ramón Gutiérrez, Caryn McTighe Musil, and Lee Knefelkamp contributed text that significantly extended the argument of these early drafts. When Frank Wong became too ill to complete the final revision of *The Drama of Diversity and Democracy*, these and other Panel members gave extensive advice and assistance to Carol Schneider, who put the report together. Troy Duster provided data on the racial recomposition of U.S. cities described in the Foreword. We also thank Gwen Dungy, senior fellow at AAC&U on the American Commitments initiative, for helpful contributions to this and other Panel reports.

Drafts of this paper were discussed with academic administrators and faculty members at several dozen small group sessions at two AAC&U annual meetings, in Washington, D.C., in January 1994, and in San Francisco in January 1995, and at institutes sponsored by the American Commitments initiative with NEH support at Williams College in August 1994 and July 1995. Presidents and trustees also commented on earlier drafts of this paper in discussions in American Commitments institutes held at Georgetown University in September 1993 and again in July 1994. We extend our thanks to all those who gave us helpful suggestions as we worked through the analyses of the relations among diversity, democracy, and community presented in these pages.

All members of the Panel owe great thanks to Maureen McNulty, who as a special assistant to the Panel has contributed editorial skill, bibliographical zeal, and organizational devotion to the Panel's work. While Maureen McNulty was on maternity leave, Charlotte Hogsett ably served as editor-advisor to the project. In addition, we thank Kathleen Connelly, Kevin Hovland, Debra Humphreys, and Suzanne Hyers, all members of the American Commitments staff who have done an outstanding job in collectively organizing the institutes at which Panel reports were discussed.

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THE AMERICAN COMMITMENTS NATIONAL PANEL

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From Many Shores: In the New York Narrows early in the century, transatlantic steamers anchored at Quarantine while inspectors and immigration officials boarded to survey the latest arrivals. Most immigrating passengers—those in third and fourth class and steerage—were put on barges there or at receiving piers upstream, and ferried to the U.S. immigration station at Ellis Island.

No name is more closely linked with massive American immigration than Ellis Island. For three decades—1892 to 1924—the greatest human tide in the nation's history swept through this narrow portal in Upper New York Bay. Until its closing in 1954, more than 17 million newcomers arrived at Ellis Island. Today almost half of all living Americans can trace their heritage to one or more family members who first stepped onto American soil at Ellis Island.

For 80 percent of the immigrants, the average stay on Ellis Island was only three to five hours. Twenty percent were detained for either a medical or legal reason. Between 1892 and 1924 only 2 percent—approximately 250,000 people among the many millions processed—were excluded from admission to the United States.

Until the 1880s, the individual states exercised what little control of immigration was necessary. A vast underpopulated country held open the door to foreigners. Notwithstanding the swell of Irish immigration in the 1840s and 1850s as a result of the potato famine, the status quo—state control—remained until the 1870s. But in that decade, as the number of newcomers began to spiral and the economy contracted, fear and concern about the social and economic effects of the country's long-standing open door policy also began to rise. In the 1870s, without catastrophe elsewhere contributing, more than 280,000 immigrants a year were streaming into the country.

America's open door on immigration was closed. Yielding to constituent demands, successive Congresses enacted more regulations and restrictions. Not only individuals but percentages of nationalities were regulated.

(Photo: Ellis Island, 1912. Text reference: The Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation, Inc., Office of Public Affairs.)

FOREWORD

HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE CONTRADICTIONS OF AMERICAN PLURALISM

At the founding of this nation, proponents and opponents of the new Constitution engaged in a vigorous debate about the effects of societal diversity on the new political experiment. Speaking for the traditional view that successful republics must be small and homogeneous, the antifederalist Brutus argued, "In a republic, the manners, sentiments, and interests of the people should be similar. If this be not the case, there will be a constant clashing of opinions; and the representatives of one part will be continually striving against those of the other."

Against this conventional understanding of the prerequisites for a successful civic republic, the federalists argued that size and its resulting heterogeneity would prove a productive force in the vitality of the new republic. As Hamilton put it, the clash of contending views could strengthen the quality of public consideration and judgment (1982). The federalists won the argument and the nation embarked on a pathbreaking experiment in both diversity and republican self-government (Sunstein 1992).

This historic wager on the civic value of deliberation across difference led the framers to refuse constitutional proposals that representatives come to the Congress "instructed" on specific decisions by their respective constituencies. The insights to be gained through processes of dialogue and debate should not, they insisted, be impeded by prior restraints. Madison called for a "yielding and accommodating spirit," a willingness to change one's mind in the context of persuasive discussion. The First Amendment's protections for free speech both asserted and sought to assure the centrality of a vibrant public dialogue in the life of the young nation (Sunstein 1993).

From the beginning then, the United States cast its lot both with heterogeneity as a defining characteristic and with dialogue and deliberation as democratic resources for the resolution of difference. Yet from the beginning as well, this historic commitment to a republic of reasoning was constrained and contradicted by the expectation that in this society founded on participatory citizenship, the citizens participating should be white and male.

The peoples who lived in the rapidly expanding United States were extraordinarily heterogeneous, culturally and racially. But from East to West, the nation's leaders acted assertively to restrict and control that diversity.

From the founding until well into the twentieth century, United States historical records abound with racial stigmatizations against non-white groups.

The Naturalization Act of 1790 enabled the extension of citizenship to immigrants, but restricted the privilege to persons who were white and male. American Indians were removed to special territories. Mexican Americans, following the conquest of their land, were politically and economically marginalized. The nation nearly sundered in its struggles over African American slavery and moved rapidly to isolate African Americans once they were freed. Chinese Americans were denied citizenship and the right to vote in California, a restraint that became federal law when Congress passed the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, making the Chinese "aliens ineligible for citizenship," and prohibiting nearly all Chinese immigration to the United States. Additional landholding restrictions were imposed on Japanese immigrants. By 1924, the Asian Exclusion Act barred all but a trickle of Asian immigration for permanent residence. The 1924 law remained in place until 1965 (Takaki 1993).

These legal constraints reflected views in the majority community and, from the founding until well into the twentieth century, United States historical records abound with racial stigmatizations against non-white groups. The definition of who counted as white was fluid, first excluding and later encompassing the Irish, southern and eastern Europeans and Jews. But the bias in favor of the United States as primarily a white nation was a constant, asserted by presidents, governors, editors, scholars, judges and countless ordinary citizens. Throughout this period, the white community made unremitting efforts, both legal and mob-driven, scientifically rationalized and emotional, to resist the dangers of racial intermarriage and consequent "mongrelization."

By the twentieth century, additional forms of segregation drew new divisions through the diverse communities that comprised the United States. As southern blacks began to move to northern cities in record numbers, these cities, through a combination of deliberate legal restraints, federal housing laws and personal intimidation, created huge neighborhoods that were exclusively African American in their composition. The South, where African Americans had typically lived side by side with whites, although subordinate to them, also moved toward new patterns of enforced residential segregation. As Massey and Denton (1993) observe in a powerful analysis of this construction of an "American Apartheid," the forms of twentieth-century segregation assigned to African Americans were different both in kind and in intensity from that experienced by other United States ethnic groups: "Even at the height of immigration from Europe, most Italians, Poles and Jews lived in neighborhoods where members of their own group did not predominate…In contrast, after the construction of the black ghetto the vast majority of blacks were forced to live in neighborhoods that were all black, yielding an extreme level of social isolation."

Higher education is uniquely heir to both these dimensions of American pluralism—the commitment to deliberation across difference as the genius of our democratic praxis and the continuing costs and consequences of historic patterns of selective discrimination compounded by racial segregation.

United States colleges and universities from the beginning acknowledged and embraced a special responsibility to ensure that the nation's leaders would be well prepared, intellectually and morally, for their responsibilities in a republic founded on reasoning. Traditions of free speech and unfettered inquiry were woven into the very fabric of the American research university. Intellectual diversity, dialogue and deliberation constitute distinctive strengths of American higher education.

Yet the color lines that divided United States communities for most of its history bounded college campuses as well. Into the 1960s, the nation's system of higher education was *de facto* almost completely racially segregated, basically either all-white or all-black with at best a 1 to 2 percent variation at some major institutions. Colleges founded to serve the African-American community were at least 99 percent black, and it was the rare majority college that was less than 97 percent white. Overall, minority participation in higher education was strikingly limited. As late as the fall of 1970, nearly 87 percent of college students in the United States were white. Nine percent were black and the combined total of Asian Americans, American Indians, and others was a mere 2.2 percent (Karen 1991). The curriculum at majority institutions was as "white" as the student body. Few courses and no core curricula challenged students to confront and explore the inherent contradictions between the nation's aspirations to human worth and dignity for all people and the persistence of its divisions and hierarchies.

From the mid-1960s on, however, leaders in the higher education community sought to alter these inheritances. Simultaneously inspired by the civil rights movement and alarmed by the 1960s ghetto rebellions and the aftermath of the Martin Luther King assassination, campus leaders made a new commitment to the expansion of both equality and opportunity and to the dismantling of systemic discrimination against any group. The women's movement which emerged at the end of the 1960s adopted much of the civil rights movement's language and vision of inclusion, adding a new dynamic of commitment and energy to campus leadership for access and equity.

These efforts, reinforced by dramatic alterations in immigration patterns since 1965, have begun to change the color of higher education. Today, nearly one quarter of those participating in higher education are persons of color. Campuses located in states experiencing high levels of immigration have seen diversity increase exponentially. Others, especially in the heart-

land states, have had to work much harder to change the racial and ethnic composition of their student bodies. But almost all campuses now see education of a diverse citizenry as integral to their missions of public leadership and service.

The curriculum is changing too. Notwithstanding the vigorously expressed doubts of many traditionally educated faculty members and public leaders, scholars have made extraordinary progress in recovering histories and legacies once deemed irrelevant to higher learning. Hundreds of colleges and universities are now seeking ways to change course content and requirements so that the curriculum includes the myriad forms of American diversity. Some of them are also asking students to study the very legacies of hierarchy and exclusion that used to leave most of humankind out of the curriculum.

Almost all campuses now see education of a diverse citizenry as integral to their missions of public leadership and service.

This record of progress notwithstanding, success in extending participation in higher education across communities of color remains uneven. African Americans constitute 12.3 percent of the population but only 8.7 percent of college students and 5.7 percent of college graduates. Hispanics, who comprise 7.7 percent of the population, make up 4.9 percent of higher education students and 2.7 percent of graduates (Justiz, Wilson, and Björk 1994). Hispanic rates of participation and attainment have been declining rather than improving, and Mexican Americans in particular are severely underrepresented among those enrolled in higher education. American Indians have increased their participation at all levels of higher education but experience significant problems with retention. American citizens of Asian, Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, and Korean heritage have higher-than-average percentages of both high school and college graduation. But members of more recent Asian immigrant groups—for example, the Cambodians, Hmong, and Laotians—have educational profiles that resemble those of African Americans and American Indians (O'Brien 1995).

The perception of uneven participation is strengthened when we look at the question of where students of color have enrolled. Proportionately, their participation in community colleges is about the same as their participation in the population as a whole. But students of color constitute only 15 percent of enrollments in four year institutions, still a significant degree of underrepresentation.

Those who are unhappy with the magnitude and direction of change on campus and in society have attacked "diversity" as a spurious and even meaningless goal for higher education. It is important to remember that in higher education, the term "diversity" references a complex set of efforts to uproot the sources and legacies of a long history of societal hierarchy and educational apartheid. The academy is far from finished with this task.

AAC&U'S AMERICAN COMMITMENTS INITIATIVE: CONNECTING CAMPUS PRACTICE AND DEMOCRATIC PURPOSE

United States colleges and universities are currently working on four distinct although interrelated dimensions of diversity, observes Daryl Smith of the Claremont Graduate School. "Representation" focuses on the absence of particular groups from the campus community and seeks ways to increase their numbers. "Campus Climate" recognizes the integral connections between institutional environment and educational attainment and seeks to change those aspects of campus climate that prove chilly for particular groups of students, whether members of designated groups, women, or the so-called "non-traditional" adults who are fast becoming a new majority in higher education. "Educational Mission" signals the realization that all students benefit from an education that fosters knowledge and competence for a multiracial, multiethnic, multiperspectival and gendered world. "Transformation" connects all the other dimensions of diversity in a fundamental reconsideration of the academy's organizing assumptions—societal, intellectual, educational and institutional (Smith 1995).

When the Association of American Colleges and Universities launched a national diversity initiative in 1993, our focus was on educational mission in its largest societal context: fostering social learning about United States diversity in relation to the nation's democratic aspiration and values. We titled this initiative American Commitments: Diversity, Democracy, and Liberal Learning, and began a broad effort both to describe the knowledge participants need in this diverse democracy and to identify effective ways of fostering this learning in goals for liberal education and the curriculum, in institutional life and campus ethos, and in the classroom practices that comprise teaching and learning.

Diversity and democracy together press educators to address the communal dimensions and consequences of higher learning.

Over time we have come to see that the dialogue in which we are engaged is indeed, as Smith's analysis suggests, transformational. Our focus on links between this nation's diversity and its democratic values has pointed the American Commitments initiative inexorably toward unresolved issues that cut across campus and society: issues of communities and community; issues of the terms and tensions that frame connection among members of a democracy who, historically, have not been equal.

Framing the question this way, those participating in the American Commitments initiative have grown increasingly uncomfortable with the individualistic assumptions that permeate public discussion of higher education. Traditionally, the academy has emphasized the benefits of higher learning—both intellectual and economic—to each individual learner. But diversity and democracy together press educators to address the communal dimensions and consequences of higher learning. By highlighting the social nexus in which all learning occurs, the linkage between diversity and democratic society challenges us to think more deeply about what individuals

learn from their experience of campus ethos—and how that learning in turn constrains or enriches the quality and vitality of American communities.

To guide what has become an exploration of both educational and societal vision, AAC&U formed a distinguished National Panel of scholars and academic leaders, all significant contributors to contemporary understandings of diversity in higher education and United States society. Members of the Panel began an extraordinary series of dialogues, in the group as a whole, in smaller subsets of the Panel, and in discussions with higher education colleagues at a series of working conferences throughout the country. To these discussions, Panel members brought their own diversities—societal, experiential, intellectual—not as suppressed background but as the context for everything they know and value and work for as leaders in higher education.

Panel members also came to the American Commitments initiative ready to learn from one another; transformational learning has been the great product of these two years of dialogue and deliberation. Frank Wong, the deeply respected Panel chair, stood at the moral center of the group's dialogue until his death in the spring of 1995. Wong modeled for everyone else a paradigmatic process of Madison's "yielding and accommodating" spirit as he sought to understand challenges to his initial assumptions, weaving them into his own contributions to the Panel's collectively developed view.

Panel members' analyses of connection and commitment in American society, deepened, complicated and reconfigured through two years of internal and public discussions of several draft reports, culminate in the publication of the report in this volume and four others in this series. Together, these National Panel reports provide a comprehensive examination of higher education's missions of leadership and service in a society that is diverse, divided by legacies of social and gender hierarchy, and yet still embarked on a historic wager that democratic dialogue across difference can lead all participants toward achievement of a just and equitable society.

HIGHER EDUCATION AS A TESTING GROUND FOR AMERICAN PLURALISM

In presenting these reports, we urge our colleagues to recognize that higher education faces a distinctive challenge and an extraordinary opportunity at what we take to be a pivotal moment in the development of United States pluralism. Educators often assume that higher education's efforts to become both diverse and inclusive simply reflect and parallel comparable commitments and progress in the wider society. In fact, however, societal movement towards inclusion is marked by both progress and striking regression.

Campuses, workplaces and the military have indeed become increasingly diverse and newly conscious that inclusion encompasses more than physical presence. But these institutional changes are occurring in the context of

an increase, not a decrease, in the nation's racial and economic residential segregation.

This means that institutions which are meeting grounds for United States diversity assume the special responsibility of fostering capacities for and commitments to pluralism that are often not part of Americans' neighborhood experience. Attending a college or university may be the first experience of a notably diverse community many students have had. Participation in a community drawn from multiple cultures and experiences calls on an inclination to engage and learn across difference that many students have had no opportunity to achieve. It requires skills that have not been practiced—or valued.

Our nation's campuses have become a highly visible stage on which the most fundamental questions about difference, equality, and community are being enacted.

Two-thirds of Americans now live in those combinations of cities and their surrounding suburbs that the Bureau of the Census designates as Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas. But whether we look at the distribution of population in these SMSAs as a whole or at the composition of the urban core within them, the striking demographic trend is the intensification, not the diminution, of racial residential segregation. Even as the nation's laws have pressed Americans toward new forms of equality and connection, Americans have not only resisted residential integration but compounded and consolidated earlier twentieth-century patterns of residential segregation.

In the last quarter century, America's urban population has undergone the most dramatic racial recomposition in its entire history. Beginning in the 1970s, the urban core within each of ten major metropolitan areas experienced a precipitous decline in the proportion of its residents that are white. New York City dropped from 75 percent white in 1970 to 38 percent white in 1990. San Francisco has gone from 75 percent to 43 percent white while in Los Angeles, the drop is even greater, from 78 percent to 37 percent. There is a similar pattern for most major metropolitan areas in the nation. The whites who leave are moving to "vanilla" suburbs, communities where persons of color are strikingly underrepresented. Conversely, although persons of color are also moving to the suburbs, the suburbs too are now becoming dotted with segregated enclaves (Duster 1995).

As these changes are occurring, the intensity of racial segregation of the population within the city has been compounding. "In sixteen metropolitan areas that house one-third of the nation's black population," write Massey and Denton (1993), "racial separation is [now] so intense that it can only be described as hypersegregation." Especially for African Americans, patterns of racial residential separation hold at every income level, from the poorest to the most affluent. When they go home at night, blacks and whites in America go to entirely separate communities.

Other forms of societal division are also intensifying in the contemporary United States. As study after study reveals, patterns of economic inequal-

ity—and the class-linked residential separations that mirror these patterns—are also compounding. The bottom three-fifths of the population are seeing their share of national income steadily decrease. The middle class feels increasingly pressed and increasingly dislocated. Statistically, it is shrinking. As the divide between well-off and extremely poor widens, the emergence of gated and often exclusive residential communities is a widely remarked social phenomenon.

In this era of increasing segregation and economic disequilibrium, the nation's long-standing legacies of racial antagonism are once again in play. Many see the efforts to reach out through affirmative action to bring disenfranchised minorities and women into institutions that excluded them as a crucial key to their own experience of economic "squeeze." Others, including many in communities of color, blame recently arrived immigrants, both legal and illegal, for closing off their own upward mobility. As in earlier periods when Americans felt economically threatened and therefore passed legislation hostile to immigrant groups, the country is again in the 1990s embarking on a new era of anti-immigrant feeling and policies.

In sum, as higher education moves forward to affirm and enact a commitment to equality, fairness, and inclusion, it does so in a context of increasing racial and class separations and antagonisms. The contemporary assault on affirmative action in higher education in California has shocked many educators for its astonishing presumption that in barely thirty years we have successfully resolved the nation's centuries of racial, ethnic, and gender contradictions. But this assault, certain to be imitated elsewhere, is symptomatic. Members of the academy who are leading diversity initiatives have been developing a knowledge of United States history that most of the country, educated on an abridged curriculum, does not possess. They are asserting the value of an engaged pluralism to which many Americans do not aspire.

HIGHER EDUCATION'S RESPONSIBILITY AND OPPORTUNITY

In its commitment to diversity, higher education assumes, therefore, both a distinctive responsibility and a precedent-setting challenge. While other institutions in the society are also fostering diversity, higher education is uniquely positioned, by its mission, values, and dedication to learning, to foster and nourish the habits of heart and mind that Americans need to make diversity work in daily life. We have an opportunity to help our campuses experience engagement across difference as a value and a public good.

Our nation's campuses have become a highly visible stage on which the most fundamental questions about difference, equality, and community are being enacted. To this effort, filled with promise and fraught with difficulty, the academy brings indispensable resources: its commitments to the advancement of knowledge and its traditions of dialogue and deliberation across difference as keys to the increase of insight and understanding.

This report and the others in this series describe ways that higher education can respond to the challenge of this pivotal moment in the American drama. Formed as we are by the academy's strong traditions of intellectual and social pluralism, higher education faces a rich opportunity to put its own commitments to knowledge at the nation's service.

We urge our colleagues to engage the reflections on the American past and future offered in these pages and draw from them a heightened sense of responsibility and possibility for our nation's brave and risky wager that dialogue across diversity can, in the end, nourish wisdom, understanding and the increase of justice.

CAROL SCHNEIDER
Director, The American Commitments Initiative

SYNOPSIS

The American Commitments National Panel of the Association of American Colleges and Universities, a diverse group embodying individually and collectively the historic pluralism of American society, has spent two years in dialogue with one another and with all parts of the higher education community about what it means to educate Americans for the diversity of their society. Through this report and others to follow, we issue a call to colleges and universities to assert a new generation of societal leadership that embraces the full range of challenges confronting American pluralism today.

Contemporary debates about diversity have been miscast as "culture wars." They are more accurately seen as the latest, but surely not final, chapter in this country's ongoing negotiations over the meaning, application and inclusiveness of its democratic principles. In this contemporary reenactment of struggles that have occupied this nation since its founding, there is an urgent need for fuller historical knowledge, for a fresh engagement with both principle and vision, and for an enlarged description of the capacities and practices necessary to the vitality of a diverse democracy.

Higher education's goal, we believe, should be to deepen public and campus knowledge of United States diversity histories, to reengage with democratic aspirations as a moral compass for intersecting communities, and to recommit ourselves—as educators and as citizens—to the still-elusive goal of meaningful equality for every American.

As a community, we have not talked enough about the public purposes that inform—or follow from—the affirmations of diversity that now guide campus practice.

ENLARGING CONCEPTIONS OF DIVERSITY

American colleges and universities have persisted too long in a largely institutional conception of diversity: diversity as admissions process and faculty hiring; diversity as student services, special programs, ethnic centers; diversity as a graduation requirement that students take at least one course on a world culture, an American ethnic group, or women anywhere at all. As a community, we have not talked enough about the public purposes that inform—or follow from—the affirmations of diversity that now guide campus practice. Our institutional conceptions have been too parochial in the face of the uncertainties, contradictions, and fissures that confront us in the larger society.

It is time for higher education to broaden our horizons and deepen the conversation. Where are we going in our commitment to diversity? What learning does diversity signify, and why should it matter to the larger public? How does what happens on campus contribute to the effectiveness of a diverse democracy?

DEMOCRACY AS MORAL COMPASS FOR DIVERSITY

Democracy as we use it here refers to the ideal that all human beings have equal value, deserve equal respect, and should be given equal opportunity to fully participate in the life and direction of the society. Diversity refers to the variety created in any society (and within any individual) by the presence of different points of view and ways of making meaning which generally flow from the influence of different cultural and religious heritages, from the differences in how we socialize women and men, and from the differences that emerge from class, age, and developed ability.

Each of these concepts, in dynamic relationship with the other, enriches and ennobles the meaning and value of the other. *Either considered without the other is diminished both in its meaning and its value*. Diversity, at its best, is recognized and respected in human societies characterized by political freedom, and is not usually respected where freedom is absent. Democracy in turn depends for its effectiveness on the fullest possible engagement of all the human talents and perspectives within a society.

When diversity is characterized by patterned inequity and persistent marginalization of specific groups, it is a symptom of democracy's failure.

But diversity can also signify unequal access to political, economic, social, and cultural power. When diversity is characterized by patterned inequity and persistent marginalization of specific groups, it is a symptom of democracy's failure, a sign of a society's unwillingness or inability to confront continuing injustices. This report explores in detail these failures in United States history and their national and human cost.

While universal democracy has not been attained in the United States, the presence of the ideal as a unifying American creed establishes it both as a societal aspiration and as a valued goal toward which our democratic system should move. That goal was captured by John Dewey (1916) when he described democracy as the most ethical aspiration conceived by human communities. The aspiration was unobtainable, he wrote, without a society's commitment to a life-long education (in which formal schooling played only one part) to develop the "capacities for associated living" in a society characterized by complexity and diversity (1927). Those capacities can only be developed if Americans, as a people, strive to understand one another's histories, experiences, and aspirations *and* if we work constantly to develop the relational skills to live and work in community with one another.

THE ROLE OF COMMUNITIES

But as Dewey's observations imply, democracy understood as moral aspiration also implies the important role of communities in providing generative and supportive contexts for human growth and association (1963b). It is here, in the crucial category of community and communalities, that diversity pushes us to a new understanding of democracy as a design for communities. Public narratives have glorified the right-bearing autonomous individual, missing the profound significance of that individual's inevitable

grounding in and obligations to particular communities. Benjamin Barber (1993) reminds us of the cost of that omission: "In the absence of community, there is no learning....[L]anguage itself is social, the product as well as the premise of sociability and conversation."

Our reality is that Americans live in diverse and multiple communities, in "circles within circles," as Rennard Strickland (1994) has written. Our society is formed through the intersections of these diverse circles, but we have spent too little time discussing what it means for a nation to draw on many communities, or for an individual to live a life that constantly crosses boundaries and weaves together webs of significance from multiple circles that may both intersect and contradict. Nor have we spent enough time on the ways in which public life depends on individual values and ethics, both shaped inexorably by formative experiences in particular communities of meaning and identity.

The American Commitments National Panel is proposing that campuses join in partnership with neighboring communities to explore a new concept of community, one that will neither erase differences nor exploit them for the advantage of some over others.

Our vision is one of relational pluralism, wherein we acknowledge, affirm, and find strength in our singularities while at the same time maintaining connections with others in intersecting circles of community, large and small.

This vision refuses dichotomies. It does not force a choice between assimilative homogenization or balkanized ethnic entities. As Patricia Hill Collins (1990) has said, "We are both/and."

SPACES OF DIALOGUE AND POSSIBILITY

Higher education has a crucial role to play at this juncture in our national life. As communities committed to inquiry and to advancing public understanding of the large societal issues that confront us all, we serve as a national meeting place, intellectually and physically, for a full exploration of fundamental issues.

We propose that our campuses acknowledge a double obligation:

1. To create new opportunities—which we term "American Commitments Community Seminars"—for both *public and campus learning* about the United States as a diverse democracy; and

2. To commit our institutions to the task of creating on our own campuses *inclusive educational environments* in which all participants are equally welcome, equally valued, and equally heard.

As educators, we are mindful that the concept of life-long learning applies not just to individuals, but to educational institutions and to the nation itself. This society as a whole is entering a new learning challenge that requires all of us to unlearn previous ways of thinking about and living with one another and to newly learn more effective ways of communicating across our diversities.

In this context, our educational institutions are called to create opportunities for this new learning. They can become what Maxine Greene (1988) has called "an authentic public space: a space of dialogue and possibility." This Panel recommends that our 3,300 campuses literally make themselves such "authentic public spaces," providing a physical forum through which American understandings of both diversity and democracy connect and enlarge.

INTRODUCTION

CAMPUS LEADERSHIP

We present this report on behalf of the Association of American Colleges and Universities. Called together as the National Panel guiding AAC&U's American Commitments initiative, we have spent the past two years in dialogue with all parts of the higher education community about the academy's role in educating Americans for the extraordinary heterogeneity of this society.

We emerge from these dialogues persuaded that higher education's leadership on diversity issues must centrally, vigorously and reciprocally engage the public as well as our campuses. Contemporary debates about diversity have been miscast as "culture wars." They are more accurately seen as the latest, but surely not final, chapter in this country's ongoing negotiations over the meaning, application and inclusiveness of its democratic principles. In this contemporary reenactment of struggles that have occupied this nation since its founding, there is an urgent need for fuller historical knowledge, for a fresh engagement with both principle and vision, and for an enlarged description of the capacities and practices necessary to the vitality of a diverse democracy. Higher education's goal, we believe, should be to deepen public and campus knowledge of United States diversity histories, to reengage with democratic aspirations as a moral compass for intersecting communities, and to recommit ourselves—as educators and as citizens—to the still-elusive goal of meaningful equality for every American.

As a Panel, we are ourselves a diverse group, embodying individually and collectively the historic pluralism of American society. Over the past two years, we have talked, listened, argued, resisted, translated, synthesized, offended, modified, negotiated, reconceived. Developing the ideas in this report in small group discussions across the country, we have encountered the entire spectrum of responses, from enthusiastic engagement to angry resistance to honest puzzlement at our emerging view that diversity marks and tests the core commitments of United States democracy.

Through all this, we have experienced the educational power of what we now recommend to you, our colleagues in higher education: a searching and comprehensive period of new learning about United States societal diversity in the context of United States democratic aspirations and possibilities.

As colleges and universities have attempted over the past thirty years to redress campus legacies of societal segregation, they have developed a conception of diversity that is at once too narrow and too inwardly focused: diversity as admissions process and faculty hiring; diversity as student services,

special programs, ethnic centers; diversity as a graduation requirement that students take at least one course on a world culture, an American ethnic group, or women anywhere at all. As a community, the academy has not talked enough about the public purposes that inform—or follow from—the affirmations of diversity that now guide campus practice. These institutional conceptions of diversity are proving too parochial in the face of the uncertainties, contradictions, and fissures that confront us in the larger society.

It is time for higher education to broaden our horizons and both deepen and expand the conversation. What learning does diversity signify and why should it matter to the larger public? Where would a genuine commitment to recognition and inclusion lead us? How does what happens on campus contribute to the effectiveness of a diverse democracy?

The timing for a broad-based public dialogue about the education of citizens for a pluralist democracy could not be more propitious.

The timing for a broad-based public dialogue about the education of citizens for a pluralist democracy could not be more propitious. This is a historical moment of profound reexamination of the meaning, purposes, and quality of our future as a diverse democracy. This is also a period of significant societal transition, marked by stunning intellectual creativity, contentious debates, and a good deal of confusion.

Higher education has a crucial role to play at this juncture in our national history. As communities committed to inquiry and to advancing public understanding of the large societal issues that confront us all, we serve as a national meeting place, intellectually and physically, for a full exploration of fundamental issues. Today, this society's important questions include challenges variously described as multiculturalism, cultural pluralism, diversity, societal and economic inequities, racial divisions, social justice. As we write this report, we see an emerging impulse in the public discourse to turn away from the human histories and realities behind these terms, to seek refuge in a remembered time when all the people foregrounded in the story of this nation were more alike than not.

Against this troubling direction, we urge the higher education community to initiate new forums for public learning, to create broad-based, mutually respectful and inclusive community seminars through which Americans can explore our diversity histories, our civic possibilities, and our essential interdependence. In these study-dialogues, designed both to expand knowledge and to revitalize principle, the members of our campus communities and our neighboring communities should be both students and teachers. If we do our work well, these efforts can result in a richer understanding of the kind of society we want to be and a deeper commitment to the renewal of our civic culture—across the academic community and throughout our society.

This report is above all a call to our colleges and universities to assert a new generation of moral and societal leadership, embracing the full range of challenges that confront American pluralism and American opportunity.

United States colleges and universities serve as privileged social spaces dedicated to full and unflinching examination of fundamental issues, without regard to vested interests that may attach to one or another outcome. Both in its commitment to inclusion and in its collaborative search for the enlargement of understanding, the academy has become a testing ground for the possibilities of American pluralism. It is now time to make our campuses a meeting ground, a place where the complexities of the American past, present and future are directly confronted and fully explored.

We have reached a moment in our nation's journey when many public leaders seem determined to ignore the inequalities that are basic to American diversity histories while others are bent on exploiting the divisions that result from those histories. The public deserves and the nation needs a more probing exploration of the issues at stake in the nation's engagement with its many forms of human difference. Higher education's unique mission as a gathering place for multiple diversities certainly makes us open and vulnerable to the conflicts engendered by our current national dialogue. But our mission to expand human knowledge and capacity also holds us accountable for discovering more productive approaches to the dialogue itself.

Internment of Japanese Americans: The decision to intern Japanese Americans in camps during World War II capped a long history of marginalizing Asian immigrants, especially, but not only, in the western states. Almost from their first arrival, Chinese immigrants were constrained by special taxes and restrictions, and plagued with periodic eruptions of racial violence. As non-whites, Asian immigrants were "aliens," not eligible for citizenship. The 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act was followed by other federal restrictions until most Asian immigration was prohibited in 1924. California and many other states passed laws to prevent Japanese immigrants from owning and leasing land. Nearly all western states prohibited marriage between whites and "Negroes, Mongolians, or Mulattoes."

After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, John B. Hughes of the Mutual Broadcasting Company asserted that Japanese residents in California were engaged in espionage and were controlling food supplies as part of a master war plan. The *Los Angeles Times* questioned the loyalty of American-born Japanese, charging that ties to their ancestral homeland were inherited. Patriotic organizations like the American Legion joined the media's vitriolic attacks and demanded that all Japanese with dual citizenship be placed in "concentration camps." Legion posts in Washington and Oregon passed resolutions urging the evacuation of all Japanese.

On February 19, 1942, President Roosevelt issued an executive order allowing General John L. DeWitt to place 110,000 Japanese Americans living on the West Coast in camps.

(Photo: Japanese Americans are taken into the receiving center of an internment camp. Text reference: A Different Mirror *by Ronald Takaki.)*

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CHAPTER ONE

HIGHER EDUCATION: A MEETING GROUND FOR AMERICAN PLURALISM

Conflicts over diversity and multiculturalism in higher education are localized symptoms of a broader renegotiation of full citizenship in the United States.
—Renato Rosaldo

The focus we propose for these study-dialogues centers on the integral connections between American diversities and the future of American democracy. We offer this framing in the conviction that contemporary representations of multiculturalism—on campus and in the public sphere—have been both distorted and dangerously partial. The distortions? The debate over diversity is frequently presented as the willful separation of different identity groups from the larger community, the "disuniting of America." Yet the truth is that most of those engaged in campus diversity work reject such balkanizing conceptions and present a far more complex and multifaceted description than is usually acknowledged of the aspirations and intersections of American pluralisms.

Dangerously partial? On all sides of the diversity debates, participants appeal—more often implicitly than explicitly—to democratic values and principles that are currently presumed rather than explored. Yet these principles, like everything else in American life, are evolving, contested, and always susceptible to the destructive forces of both ignorance and hostility. Those of us who are educators, working in colleges and universities that take pluralism as an organizing principle, tend to assume in our diversity efforts a set of societal commitments to pluralism that are more vulnerable than we acknowledge.

As higher education fosters campus and public learning about the human experiences, pain and aspirations behind the language of "difference," we must also engage the principles that can guide this society's commitment to social justice. A democracy's commitment to social justice presumes a sense of community, a shared past, and a robust public dialogue about the great issues that confront it. As a nation we lack either clarity about or a broad conversation concerning what we mean by social justice. The lack of generative and inclusive dialogue on these topics weakens the bonds of connection and mutuality that are intrinsic to a just and equitable society.

On all sides of the diversity debates, participants appeal—more often implicitly than explicitly—to democratic values and principles that are currently presumed rather than explored.

The American dialogue with its own diversity goes to the very heart of the society's fundamental questions: What does it mean to be an American? What is the meaning of American democracy? How does a commitment to justice frame our responses to the persistence of unequal power and of large pockets of political, economic, cultural, and educational disadvantage in this society?

These are questions of principle with which this society must struggle. But they are also questions that cannot be adequately addressed unless we as a citizenry have an accurate understanding of our nation's long history with diversity. A generation of scholars has already been at work recovering a fuller understanding of that history. It is now time for us to engage our communities and the larger public in the forms of inquiry that have already inspired many on campus to fundamentally rethink older, ethnocentric, truncated versions of the American story.

The study-dialogues we propose will challenge widely circulated but ahistorical, even anti-historical representations of the issues at stake in contemporary debates about multiculturalism and diversity in American life. Some interpreters present the contemporary debate as if the current decade were the first time in our nation's history that there is *not* a consensus about what it means to be an American. Others imply that there is a single and obvious national definition of what it means to be an American and that if only all groups would adopt this definition, the current disturbing debates about American diversity could subside yet again. And virtually everyone proceeds in these discussions oblivious to the long American history of fundamental disputes over the nature and application of the political, religious and societal freedoms that we have evolved since our founding. Overlooked as well are the nation's resilient traditions of white privilege, religious prejudice, recurrent nativism, social Darwinism, Americanization projects, and persistent homophobia. Yet despite the missed connections between past and present in United States diversity dialogues, these dimensions of United States history resonate in our current exchanges. They invisibly shape different participants' stances within the dialogues—and within the larger society.

Failing to connect these parts of our past with contemporary travails over policy matters—immigration, affirmative action, welfare—that are integrally related to unsolved issues of social difference and societal marginalization, the United States as a polity is perpetually surprised and perpetually unprepared for each new societal eruption. From the New York Irish-African American Draft Riots in 1863 to the widespread urban riots a century later, United States leaders persistently neglect to stay with the larger societal questions that such conflagrations illuminate, if all too briefly. Failing or fearing to define as public questions the connections

between difference and inequality, we make too little progress as a nation with answers sufficient to live by.

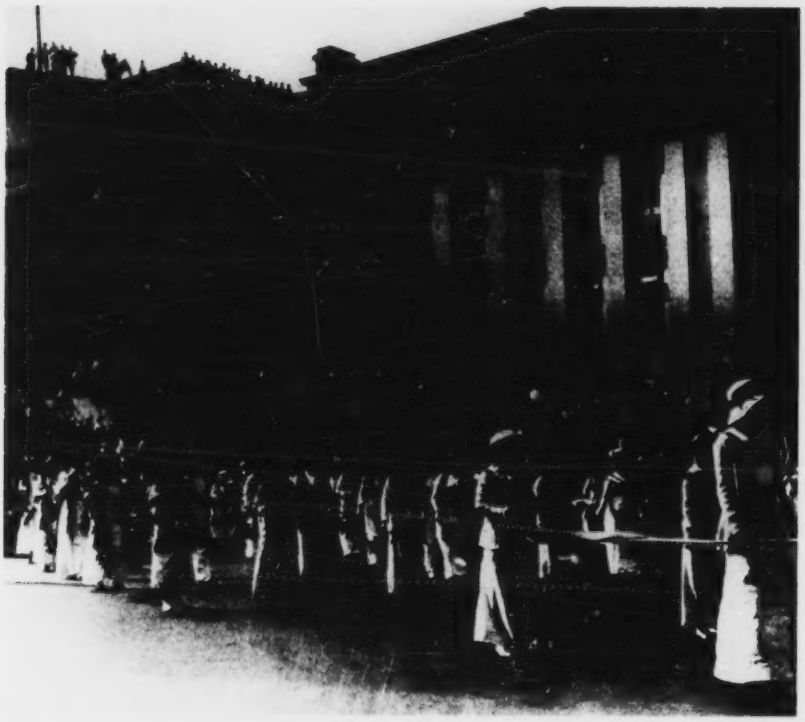
The fact is that as a people, we Americans have engaged in a continuous struggle over who belongs and who is marginalized. For three centuries, we have confronted—more as particular questions than as national principles—issues of inclusion and exclusion, race and prejudice, justice and injustice, power and marginalization, wealth and poverty. Americans would be better able to engage the complexities of current diversity debates if we placed them in the context of what has already been a long, contentious history. Americans' discomfort with difference is not simply the product of recent demographic developments.

The academy has long recognized its dependence on and commitment to intellectual diversity; our mission statements reaffirm that commitment. When we discuss diversity in the context of United States histories and democratic values, however, we are not simply talking about multiple forms of knowledge or disparate points of view. Rather, we are engaging fundamental issues of how we live together and on what terms we form our communalities. In other reports in this series, we address these questions as they affect the campus directly: goals for learning; the curriculum; the way we teach; the mission and ethos of the institution.

In this report, by contrast, we identify questions that confront us as a society, proposing not answers but issues that Americans need to address and that our campuses can lead in raising. We do not present these issues as primarily matters of recognizing, valuing or celebrating the nation's diverse cultural traditions and communities. We believe that there have been too many celebratory embracings of diversity from our campuses with too little attention to the structures of inequality and disparate power that color United States perceptions of difference. In this report, therefore, we focus on civic themes, and on questions about diversity, inequality and connection in American life. We do so in the conviction that a full engagement with United States diversities and their history can point us forward, toward new forms of recognition, reciprocity, and communality.

Our basic message to campus and community is simple but not easy. We have reached the limits of an earlier conception of American society: monocultural, monochromatic, individualistic. As an older era ends and we struggle with alternative conceptions of the future, leadership is needed, at the level of principle, at the level of knowledge, at the level of building human capacities for associated living. The academy, which has already become a gathering place for American pluralisms, does not have the answer to all these questions. But it is our mission to raise fundamental questions. It is time for us to do so.

We have reached the limits of an earlier conception of American society: monocultural, monochromatic, individualistic.



Women Remake the Public Sphere: In 1854, suffragettes Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony and Ernestine Rose presented petitions with ten thousand signatures seeking woman's suffrage and married women's property rights to the New York state legislature. The action was a giant step in women's self-determination.

Whether advocating reforms to end slavery, liberalize women's property and voting rights, or change destructive social practices, the women's movement proved a formidable social force, mobilizing women for social change across racial and class lines. Sojourner Truth electrified audiences and challenged conventional notions of race, class, and domesticity by insisting that black women be included in discussions about the changing roles of women. "That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages and lifted over ditches....Nobody ever helps me into carriages or over mud puddles...and ar'nt I a woman?" she asked. Black journalist Ida B. Wells organized what became an international anti-lynching movement, editing her own newspaper in Memphis, Tennessee, in which she exposed the economic motives of white violence and urged black economic resistance.

Absent the right to vote, women fought for change through multiple forms of grassroots organizing. Settlement houses, clubs like the General Federation of Women's Clubs, conventions, and literary vehicles like pamphlets and newspapers allowed women to keep their issues before society while also achieving substantial reforms. On August 26, 1920, the Nineteenth Amendment giving women the right to vote became a part of the United States Constitution, and a major victory was scored in the quest for self-determination.

(Photo: Suffrage march in Washington, D.C., 1913. Text reference: Born for Liberty *by Sara M. Evans.)*

CHAPTER TWO

DEMOCRACY AND DIVERSITY: ESSENTIAL CONNECTIONS

We must focus our attention on the public square—the common good that undergirds our national and global destinies. The vitality of any public square ultimately depends on how much we care about the quality of our lives together.

—Cornel West

On what terms can higher education shape inclusive and mutually respectful dialogues about democracy and diversity in America? We can begin our conversations by exploring the relationship between democracy and diversity as nothing less than a mainstream narrative of American life. The complex and constantly evolving relationship between these two aspects of American culture helps us to understand our past, our present dilemmas, and our future possibilities. When Alexis de Tocqueville noted the peculiar tension between the ideal of equality and the ideal of liberty in America, he was expressing, in different language, the peculiar tension between democracy and diversity. When we ask what it means to be an American in the twenty-first century, the response must somehow take into account both democracy and diversity.

The tensions between democracy and diversity create, we believe, an obscured, too often forgotten, context for engaging pervasive issues of difference and inclusion in our country. These tensions can paralyze and divide, and have done so. But the energy they generate has also driven us forward, called by dreams, pressed by nightmarish failures, strengthened by the realization that it is as patriotic to protest against "the establishment" as it is to defend it. These cornerstone concepts—our aspiration to democracy, our struggles to come to terms with the range of American diversity—have continuing resonance today even as they must be freshly redefined in the context of new self-understandings and realities.

Democracy, here, refers to the ideal that all human beings have equal value, deserve equal respect, and should be given equal opportunity to fully participate in the life and direction of the society. Diversity refers to the variety created in any society (and within any individual) by the presence of different points of view and ways of making meaning which generally flow from the influence of different cultural and religious heritages, from the dif-

ferences in how we socialize women and men, and from the differences that emerge from class, age, and developed ability.

Each of these concepts, in dynamic relationship with the other, enriches and ennobles the meaning and value of the other. Either considered without the other is diminished both in its meaning and its value. Diversity, at its best, is recognized and respected in human societies characterized by political freedom, and is not usually respected where freedom is absent. Democracy in turn depends for its effectiveness on the fullest possible engagement of all the human talents and perspectives within a community.

Diversity without democratic principles has no moral compass.

But diversity can also signify unequal access to political, economic, social, and cultural power. When diversity is characterized by patterned inequity and persistent marginalization, it is a symptom of democracy's failure, a sign of a society's unwillingness or inability to confront continuing injustices.

Democracy that does not welcome diversity can degenerate into a totalitarian uniformity and an inability to adapt to changing historical conditions. The decline of coerced and unvarying socialist democracies around the world has amply illustrated what can happen when the idea of democracy is separated from the idea of diversity. But diversity without democracy has no moral compass. In the contemporary world, democratic values provide a standard—a moral compass—by which a society can be held accountable for delivering equal justice.

The world has witnessed many countries with great linguistic, religious, regional, and social diversity have their claims to democracy severely undermined by the inequalities that caste traditions impose between their own diverse groups. Our country, too, faces many contradictions between its ideals and aspirations and its realities. These contradictions are wounds in the body politic that bleed us as we continue to ignore them.

Yet United States histories also show us that every generation has been challenged by a diverse populace to expand the implications of democracy in the face of contradictions and failures. Despite the widely held view that United States democratic practices derive from European culture and history, the truth is that our particular interpretations of democracy have evolved on this soil, through a process of continuing negotiations between the powerful and those seeking a share in power. In American history, there has been recurrent insistence that democratic practice be held accountable to its ideals by a continuing series of groups: abolitionists, white women, men and women of color, the economically disadvantaged, religious communities, and gays and lesbians. Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" is not a vision born in Europe; it weaves together strands of pain and hope and possibility in a distinctively American imagination. But as King's life work reminds us, the task of expanding democratic inclusion and equality in the

United States has never moved smoothly forward; progress has been made by struggle and in the face of strong, sometimes violent, resistance.

Today the United States is in a new period of societal negotiation, a period whose outcomes are anything but certain. This period of societal self-examination begs for elucidation, for intelligent dialogue, for historical perspective, for willingness to hear all parts of our communities as we consider the American future. Where better to set and model higher standards for these explorations than our campuses, communities dedicated by mission to the quest for knowledge, wisdom, and the expansion of human capacity?

Claiming Democracy: Blacks represented nearly half of the population of Montgomery, Alabama, when the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., was thrust into the leadership role that launched the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Civil Rights Movement. Reared in Atlanta, King grew up with the injustices of Jim Crow. Southern blacks and whites were segregated in education, housing, religion, and most everyday encounters from riding the bus to buying a hamburger. King recalled being "the angriest I have ever been in life" when as an eleventh grader he was forced to surrender his bus seat to a white passenger. The incident occurred in a distant Georgia town where he had just won a prize for his presentation on "The Negro and the Constitution." Returning home with his teacher, the two boarded a bus bound for Atlanta which filled up quickly. The white driver ordered student and teacher to relinquish their seats to white passengers. King refused. "You black son-of-a-bitch!" he was called. King's teacher advised him to avoid a confrontation.

Years later in his first speech to the Montgomery boycotters, King forcefully and eloquently voiced black frustration and black determination. "There comes a time when people get tired," he declared. "We are here this evening to say to those who have mistreated us so long that we are tired—tired of being segregated and humiliated, tired of being kicked about by the brutal feet of oppression." Yet the boycotters' resistance, "must be guided by the deepest principles of our Christian faith," King said. "Love must be our regulating ideal."

(Photo: King addresses a group of Watts district residents in Los Angeles. Text reference: A Different Mirror *by Ronald Takaki.)*

CHAPTER THREE

DEMOCRACY AND AMERICAN PLURALISM

I cannot repeat too often that [Democracy] is a word the real gist of which still sleeps, quite unawaken'd, notwithstanding the resonance and the many angry tempests out of which its syllables have come...It is a great word, whose history, I suppose, remains unwritten because that history has yet to be enacted.

—Walt Whitman

In suggesting that democratic ideas and values provide a moral compass for our engagement with diversity, we recognize that we propose a contested standard. The term "democracy," as this Panel was repeatedly reminded in our own conversations throughout the country, holds a range of meanings in the popular culture, not all of them by any means positive. To test this statement, ask a dozen people what comes to mind when they hear the word. "Democracy" is widely seen as synonymous with politics and government, and the cynicism that surrounds both is all-pervasive. The negative connotations that many associate with "democracy" can work effectively to close off diversity discussions rather than advance them. This is perhaps especially true on campus, where there is small tolerance for cant and a long memory for the many ways in which democratic rhetoric becomes attached to jingoistic, self-serving, or destructive policies.

But the mixed feelings many Americans hold about democracy are part of our point and part of our summons to the higher education community. There is a real need in this country to distinguish between democracy's mixed record in *practice*—here and elsewhere—and the *possibilities* that remain inherent in democratic values and commitments. To what else can we appeal, after all, in the pursuit of recognition and justice for all Americans, if not to the values that undergird this country's commitment to equality and self-determination? One of the ways in which the academy can serve the nation is to disentangle democracy's multiple meanings and help advance the habits of public dialogue and deliberation about our public values and purposes that the founders considered basic to the constitution of this republic.

DEMOCRACY AS HISTORICAL FORCE

Vaclav Havel (1994) reminds us that those who believe in democracy need to engage in critical self-examination lest they continue to see it as "something given, finished, and complete as is, something that can be exported like cars or television sets, something that the more enlightened purchase and the less enlightened do not." The temptation to see democracy as both

a given and a national export frequently colors one of the common meanings of democracy: the assumption that it is a historical force, launched on a trajectory toward inevitable world triumph, with the United States the exemplar for other countries.

This view of democracy as a triumphing world force goes back to our founding. The birth of the United States of America in the eighteenth century was announced as a political experiment unprecedented in Europe. The intellectual and political ferment inspired by the American and other eighteenth century revolutions produced both new claims and claimants, and powerful opposition. By the nineteenth century, it seemed to some in power—and some struggling for power—that democracy was a historical force that would ultimately reshape all human societies. As monarchies fell and aristocracies were challenged, sometimes successfully, the political developments important to Europe-centered observers seemed to suggest that democratic forces were indeed gaining ascendancy.

For those excluded or marginalized, the system has been more notable for its failures, even its treacheries, than for its successes.

In the last portion of the twentieth century, there is again a widespread view in this country that democracy is in some sense a "given," that the forces of democracy have "won" the world-wide struggle for supremacy. But now, as in the past, there is every reason to recognize that democratic ideas have often been belied by the practices that accompany them. In the nineteenth century, democratic ideas were carried around the world, in part, ironically, by imperialists whose "democratic" values, when they claimed them, were contradicted by their purposes and tactics. The failures of some nineteenth-century "democracies" and democratic movements led to totalitarian regimes. These, too, claimed to be "for the people" while establishing themselves, but in some cases then set about violently repressing not only dissent but diversity. Genocide of the Jews by the German state that also set out to exterminate Gypsies, gays, and the mentally retarded in the name of national "purity;" Stalin's massive campaigns of terror that went far beyond the elimination of outright dissent; South Africa's brutal system of apartheid—each appropriated democratic rhetoric for profoundly inhumane practice.

Toward the end of the twentieth century, in a postcolonial age—after the most recent waves of the Civil Rights movement, after revolutions of many kinds around the globe, after the collapse of Communism in the former Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe and the rise of democratic fervor in China—it was once again said that democracy will sweep across the world, liberating peoples and countries of vastly differing heritages. But the world had hardly finished celebrating moments such as the toppling of the Berlin Wall when ethnic slaughters began. Students had barely begun their call for change in Tiananmen Square when tanks brutally repressed them.

What this history suggests is the great fragility of democratic ideals and the greater vulnerability of openness to diversity, even in societies empowered with self-determination. In the face of this fragility, as Havel contends, there is a profound need for democratic self-examination, for efforts to un-

derstand and advance the conditions under which democratic and cultural pluralism can take root. Throughout the world, other countries have embarked on their own experiments with democracy. While a few American specialists are involved in and contributing to these efforts, there has been strikingly little dialogue in the United States, either on our campuses or in the larger public, about the implications of these experiments for United States democracy. What might we learn from them? What self-knowledge might Americans gain from the judgments leaders elsewhere are forming from their comparative study of democracies? How might study of other societies' experience interrupt the reigning American assumption that, critical though we may be of our government and politics, United States democracy rests on laws of nature that secure its perpetuity?

DEMOCRACY AS POLITICAL PROCESS: AN AMBIGUOUS LEGACY

At a more everyday level, of course, most people do not consciously live in a world of historical forces. We view democracy in more limited, concrete terms. For many in this country, democracy is a political system that has made America the most successful experiment in self-government in the history of humankind. For others, it is a system that has never been enacted, and perhaps was never meant to be.

Our early leaders devised a system of checks and balances, a written constitution with an independent judiciary to interpret it. They wrote a bill of rights intended to prevent governmental authority from encroaching on individual freedoms and in theory, if too persistently not in practice, designed to extend equality before the law to all citizens. The system explicitly separated church and state in order to allow and protect religious pluralism. It wove together disparate and unequal communities—the original states—in a set of relationships carefully designed to deter powerful communities from tyrannizing weaker communities.

Over time, this country has evolved what Michael Sandel (1982) terms a "procedural" conception of democracy, one which emphasizes a *process* that seeks to protect the liberties of individuals and groups but does not assume that a particular moral outcome should be advanced by the government. The role of government is to manage the process and protect the freedoms that are basic to it, without advocating the interest of one group or another. Like "the invisible hand" which operates in the free market theory of Adam Smith, the procedures that define liberal democracy guide an outcome which, again in theory, secures the greatest freedom and therefore the greatest good for the greatest number.

In the larger sweep of history, this system has been more durable and more open than anything that has existed in our time. But for many Americans, this democratic system has not lived up to its promise of equality. For those excluded or marginalized, the system has been more notable for its failures, even its treacheries, than for its successes. For the American Indians of this country, the system, although technically "legal" in its process, has worked

As Dewey has written, the aspiration to democracy is unobtainable without a society's commitment to a life-long education to develop the "capacities for associated living."

to usurp their rights and their territory and to undermine their culture. The framers of the Constitution did not recognize the humanity or the equality of African Americans; even after their emancipation from slavery, the Fourteenth Amendment, and the passage of Civil Rights laws, full equality for African Americans has been elusive if not illusory. For Chinese immigrants in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, exclusion laws, passed through a "democratic" process, denied rights of citizenship and normal family life. For Japanese children who studied American civics while interned in a wartime camp, the claims of the democratic system could only appear as the height of hypocrisy. For Latino Americans, second class citizenship has been a common experience throughout their history in the Southwest, often supported by "democratically" passed legislation. And for women, winning the vote in the early part of this century and gaining legal access to the process clearly did not provide full political or economic equality.

These refusals in the midst of the national mythology about our free and open society reveal, among other things, that resistance to "outsiders" is endemic to American society as well as to other countries. The changing complexion of this republic has provoked anxiety in every period of our history. Benjamin Franklin worried that Germans would overrun Pennsylvania. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the arrival of large numbers of Irish Catholics and Eastern European Jews fueled nativist fears about the corruption of the largely Anglo-Protestant body politic. Fear of the "Yellow Peril" led to the restriction of Chinese and later Japanese immigrants. Today many U.S. citizens, including leading intellectuals, are uneasy about the immigration of Mexicans and people of Central America and the Caribbean. Arab Americans have also been the target of intense hostility and suspicion. Our colleges and universities, which once operated with quota systems to restrict the admission of Jews and openly refused to admit African Americans or women of any color, continue today to be caught up in the politics of the composition of their student bodies. The ambiguous legacy continues.

If some people have been served well by this democratic system and others poorly, it is not surprising that some would judge it the best system in the world and others would feel alienated from it. In a system that is fundamentally process-oriented and focused on the protection of individual rights rather than reciprocal obligations, it is relatively easy to conclude that if one is treated well by the system, the system is working well. Concomitantly, those who are not treated well must have somehow failed to take advantage of the system. But for those whose presence in the United States has largely been resisted or unrecognized, the failures of this democracy to provide full recognition, equality and opportunity to all members of the republic are a continuing source of pain and anger.

When we juxtapose these differing perceptions of the essential goodness of the United States system, they underline this Panel's argument that the country needs a fundamental and broadly inclusive conversation about the

basic terms of our civic covenants and about different groups' experiences of what it means, in practice, to live in the United States. A version of this conversation is already under way, as citizens who feel economically and morally disenfranchised have forced a public debate over such issues as the role of government, religious expression, and the sanctity of life. But the debate is partial as well as rancorous, recognizing specific groups while silencing and stigmatizing others. The academy, with its fundamental commitments to the role of knowledge and the power of collaborative inquiry, needs to model and create the broader study-dialogue, respectful and widely inclusive, that we see nowhere else.

DEMOCRACY AS UNIVERSAL ASPIRATION

American democracy is, of course, far more than a political system. We have evolved in this country an American Creed represented in a cluster of ideas, institutions, and habits that expresses the essential ideals of democracy: the dignity and equality of all human beings and their rights to freedom, justice, opportunity, and self-determination.

In this context, democracy represents an aspirational ideal, a persistent pressure to widen the application and achievement of "the dignity of and equality of all human beings," a constant reminder that the principles of the nation have not been fully realized in practice. Gunnar Myrdal (1944) believed that this set of ideals was an American creed, the unifying element in an America made up of people from many different foreign origins, many different races, and many different religions. This perception of a "creed" is deepened by the legacy of American reformers who demanded that the promises of democracy be fulfilled for those systematically denied the rights of full participatory citizenship and equality—a legacy that is at work to this day.

While universal democracy has not been attained in American society, the presence of the ideal as a unifying American creed establishes it both as a universal aspiration and as a valued goal toward which our democratic system should move. That goal was captured by John Dewey (1916) when he described democracy as the most ethical aspiration conceived by human communities. The aspiration was unobtainable, he wrote, without a society's commitment to a life-long education (in which formal schooling played only one part) to develop the "capacities for associated living" in a society characterized by complexity and diversity (1927). Those capacities can only be developed if Americans, as a people, strive to understand one another's histories, experiences, and aspirations *and* if we work constantly to develop the relational skills to live and work in community with one another (1963b).

This framework gives us a different context for a conversation about the intersections of diversity and democracy. Democratic possibilities become a national narrative in which all Americans participate—indeed, in which all have an opportunity and obligation to participate. Americans may have sharply different opinions about the degree to which democratic values have been fulfilled (or even intended), but in this context at least, all who live here are part of the same narrative, linked by thematic threads woven through the life of the nation.

DEMOCRACY AS COMMUNAL CONNECTIONS

If the quest for recognition and equality is a unifying narrative in American history, however, we must also recognize that the narrative not only remains unfinished, but, in important respects, has been only partially sketched. In recent decades, democratic aspirations and values have been primarily defined in terms of self-determination, popularly elected governments that protect individual civil and human rights. But as Dewey's observations imply (1963b), democracy understood as moral aspiration also implies the important role of communities in providing generative and supportive contexts for human growth and association.

It is here, in conceptions of community and of connections among communities, that diversity—that is, recognition of diverse communities—moves into productive tension with inherited conceptions of democracy, prompting the realization that Americans' highly individualistic interpretations of democratic aspiration stand in need of reconsideration and enlargement. In the twentieth century, public narratives have glorified the rights-bearing individual, autonomous, unfettered, self-determining. Freedom is popularly described as the liberty to do as one likes, free of restrictions and subject to no constraints other than the injunction to "do no harm." Earlier in this century, public movements sought to enlarge the sphere of "civil rights," with the federal government viewed as the guarantor of individual rights and freedoms against unwarranted restrictions or intrusions. More recently, we see a major effort to reduce the role of the federal government but still with the goal of increasing individual liberty and autonomy. *Both these movements distract attention from community and reciprocal communal obligations as an integral dimension of human society. Both have the effect of diminishing conceptions of a public sphere, whether local or national.* Benjamin Barber (1993) has described the results of this diminution as a "sickness of community" in our society, "its corruption, its rupturing, its fragmentation, its breakdown; finally, its vanishing and its absence."

The description of freedom as unfettered liberty and democracy as primarily a process for the protection of rights misses the profound significance of each individual's integral grounding in and obligations to particular communities. Barber reminds us of the cost of that omission: "In the absence of community, there is no learning....[L]anguage itself is social, the product as well as the premise of sociability and conversation." Outside the context of community, so deeply necessary that without it there is not even language, there can be only a cacophony of noise.

The fundamental error in the telling of the American democratic narrative is that we have assumed the United States as a singular community, formed by a contract among autonomous individuals, with cultural differences among us—in religion, for example—seen as private rather than public dimensions of life. Those who tell the story this way often insist on universal subscription to a "common culture"—usually seen as Anglo-American

language, values, and customs—as a requisite part of the civic contract because without some conception of shared culture, the bonds of connection among all these autonomous rights-bearing individuals would be thin indeed.

The reality, however, is that Americans live in multiple cultural and identity communities, in "circles within circles, and circles placed upon circles," as Rennard Strickland (1994) has written. United States society is formed through the intersections of these diverse circles. While there are many tensions among their disparate beliefs and commitments, the United States has not only survived but prospered as it has, over time, extended the circle of inclusion to encompass previously marginalized or excluded groups.

Americans live in multiple cultural and identity communities, in "circles within circles, and circles placed upon circles."

Yet misled by an overly individualistic understanding of democratic principles and aspirations, we have spent too little time discussing what it means for a nation to draw on many identity communities, or for an individual to live a life that constantly crosses boundaries and weaves together webs of significance from multiple circles—larger and smaller—that may both intersect and contradict. Nor have Americans spent enough time exploring all the ways in which public life depends on each individual's sense of obligations to others, a moral sense shaped inexorably by formative experiences in particular communities of meaning and identity.

To date, the national conversation about these issues has been at best superficial, at worst dogmatic and punitive. Sometimes it sounds as though national leaders mean to send all circles unfamiliar to them back to the shores from which they came. But of course, the diversity of the circles on this continent is not new; it predates by centuries the founding of the nation. Rather, we are in a new time, a time when it is no longer possible to imagine that a nation peopled from all parts of the world does or could subscribe to a single, homogeneous cultural heritage.

Confronting the multiplicity of and intersections among our constitutive communities, we can recognize that our circles both deserve recognition and offer in themselves traditions of communality, mutuality, and intersection which are resources for the future of American democracy. Maxine Greene (1988) reminds us that freedom is always experienced in relation to others. We are free, not because we are unencumbered, but because of our capacity to envision and to create forms of society that respect one another's integrity and needs, including the needs for recognition, reciprocity, and dignity for each of the particular communities that define Americans' most immediate realities.

It is in this context, above all, that new public learning about the intersections of diversity and democracy can make the most important contribution to the nation. As we search for communal understandings of democracy to reframe individualistic ideas that have proved insufficient to the complexity of American pluralism, the academy can lead the way in turning to diverse communities of all kinds, already gathered in this country, for insight and wisdom on ways to establish a richer sense of mutuality and communality throughout our society.

Broken Treaties and the Trail of Tears: As a frontiersman and political leader in Tennessee, Andrew Jackson led a bloody 1814 war against the Creek that successfully appropriated tribal territory for the expansion of the "republick." Elected president of the United States in 1828, Jackson became a major player in the forced removal of American Indian nations from areas that they held by federal treaties and ancestral inheritance.

Although federal treaties gave authority over the Indians to Congress, Jackson stood back as Mississippi abolished the sovereignty of the Choctaw Nation and Georgia passed a law extending state authority over the Cherokee Nation. In 1830, a new federal law provided for Indian removal west of the Mississippi. A treaty was forced on the unwilling Choctaw, and many of them marched west in a winter journey that felled one-fifth of the company. From 1830 to 1838, the Cherokee Nation tried unsuccessfully to fight these policies with strong appeals to Washington and petitions signed by upwards of fifteen thousand Cherokee. As most Cherokee continued to resist a new "treaty" for their removal, troops were called in to round up the men, women, and children and place them in internment camps before forcing them on a what became a deadly winter march westward. The journey west in 1838, called the "Trail of Tears," took the Cherokee from their ancestral lands and fertile farms. Sheltered by little more than what they carried on their backs or in wagons, one-quarter of the nation perished from cold and disease.

(Photo: "The Trail of Tears" by Robert Lindneux. Text reference: A Different Mirror *by Ronald Takaki.)*

CHAPTER FOUR

DIVERSITY AND INEQUALITY: DEMOCRACY'S PAINFUL FAILURES

When those who have the power to name and to socially construct reality choose not to see or hear you, whether you are dark-skinned, old, disabled, female, or speak with a different accent or dialect than theirs, when someone with the authority of a teacher, say, describes the world and you are not in it, there is a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked into a mirror and saw nothing.

—Adrienne Rich

In the effort to rethink and renew the bonds of human connections, the diverse cultural—i.e., communal—traditions gathered in this country are a resource this society has not yet fully recognized or explored. But the study of our diversity histories also points us inexorably toward the real and tragic failures as well as the possibilities of United States democracy. Depending on where one stands in the social order, diversity thus takes on very different shapes and hues, some positive but others painful and destructive of the civic bonds that ought to exist among us. These fault lines and failures punctuate the drama of diversity and democracy. They need to be examined and fully confronted if United States democracy is to move forward more productive relations among all the communities within this republic.

DIVERSITY AS DAILY CHALLENGE

The term "diversity," like "democracy," holds multiple resonances in the United States. For many Americans, diversity is experienced primarily and often intensely as a daily practical challenge. As the country becomes both more diverse and more self-conscious about its unfinished agendas, Americans meet at every turn the still unanswered questions about our obligations to and relations with one another. To survive with a certain equilibrium demands reflective and nuanced negotiation of conflicts that arise from all forms of human difference—ethnic, religious, racial, sexual, political, class and developed ability—differences that we now confront in the daily course of life.

The family, for example, is experiencing unprecedented change. Intermarriages between people of different racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds have brought United States diversities literally to the dinner table—and to all the family events and religious celebrations that must enact and express familial connections. The heightened visibility of members of the gay and lesbian communities has further transformed many ex-

tended families into fragile alliances among people whose love motivates the struggle to understand one another.

Increasingly, the workplace is also a site that includes a wide range of people. Colleagues have to work harder to understand the perspectives, responses and assumptions of co-workers from many different societal and cultural contexts. Cultural knowledge and sensitivity have become job skills, essential and yet exercised in contexts of chronic uncertainty.

Our campuses also include a wider range of people, providing for significant percentages of students an experience of heterogeneity more intense and demanding than anything they have known in their previous, often homogeneous, schools and communities. If community is central to education as it is to democracy, then students and their educators, too, need to acquire the skills necessary for learning in a pluralistic community.

Families, workplaces, campuses—these have become the testing grounds for contemporary diversity. They are sites of intercultural negotiation, a natural and daily curriculum demanding knowledge both of our diversities and our divisions, and the willingness and ability to communicate across them. At the same time, these meeting places are also invaluable sources of national learning, establishing spaces where individuals discover personally compelling reasons to make the effort that negotiation across differences inescapably requires.

DIVERSITY AND INEQUALITY

Just as there are individual tales of American diversity, there are also public stories, stories that guide consciousness powerfully and often imperceptibly. As with any other narrative, public stories challenge us to ask how the story is framed. Who are the tellers and listeners? What is included? What is omitted? What have been the interpretations of the narratives? What are the sources of these narratives and their meanings? What can we learn from attention to the multiple presentations?

For many, the country's history has been and continues to be the proud story of immigrants who came as economic, political, and religious refugees, often fleeing poverty, starvation, war and conscription, persecution or even genocide. For those who hold this view, there is great resonance in the idea of the United States as a beautiful mosaic, or a brightly colored tapestry woven from the threads of many heritages and human stories.

For others, especially those with financial resources, diversity is part of American abundance. Eating at a Thai restaurant on Friday night, shopping at the local Pier I import store on Saturday morning, sipping French Veuve Clicquot champagne on Saturday evening while listening to the blues repertoire of Billie Holiday—all these constitute daily experiences of appreciating (and consuming) diversity.

Seen in still another light, especially in educational and other idea-driven settings, diversity is about the representation of different points of view, on

a playing field that is envisioned as level. Just as television news magazines, in the name of objective journalism, juxtapose liberal and conservative commentators, Republicans and Democrats, left and right, men and women, so too persons committed to an effectively contextual view of diversity imagine this republic as a rich cornucopia of races, regions, and religions that must each be represented.

The problem with each of these diversity narratives is that they celebrate cultural manifestations of social differentiation in a vacuum, with insufficient attention to historical context and without an exploration of the underlying structures of inequality that generate the recognition of human difference. The American mosaic is in truth formed from materials of different luster and size. Small rich pieces are laid beside large poor ones. Life in the United States, when all its peoples and all its ways of life are considered together, is one of profound inequalities, of splendor and squalor situated side by side.

Envisioning the American tapestry seldom prompts questions about the underlying woof and warp of power relationships that constitute the fabric of our republic. The voices of all Americans are never heard as equal nor do they have the same power to represent. The "objective" balance sought in the media and intellectual communities inevitably privileges power centers and powerful figures, even when effort is made to include the views of the dispossessed.

Life in the United States, when all its peoples and all its ways of life are considered together, is one of profound inequalities, of splendor and squalor situated side by side.

As members of the American Commitments National Panel, we believe that we cannot move forward as a republic until Americans confront the power relations on which social differentiation in our society is founded. The presumption that all groups meet on a level playing field obscures entirely both the contours of our history and the contexts in which many Americans live their lives.

The United States has been formed not only by immigrants who sought to come here but by the military conquest of indigenous peoples and the involuntary importation of African slaves and indentured servants who formed a subjugated caste, deprived of the liberties on which the country prided itself. During the nineteenth century, the United States was extended through the forceful conquest of territories and populations claimed by France, Mexico, Russia, and Spain and through the extensive recruitment of cheap immigrant labor.

The diversity of peoples, cultures, and ways of life we now recognize in the United States was thus forged in part through the violence of conquest and coercion, and consolidated through territorial dispossession and economic and political domination. The power relations established through these processes figure to this day in shaping the hierarchies and asymmetries that characterize contemporary American diversity. The class inequalities and status distinctions that we recognize today are scarcely random, nor do they reflect "natural" results of unequal intrinsic merit. Class inequalities

and status distinctions perpetuate earlier patterns of political and economic domination. These hard legacies of United States history are manifested daily in contemporary experiences of prejudice, discrimination, and unequal participation in the larger society.

Diversity, then, is not only the recognition of differences, but the recognition of those differences as rooted in power relationships which themselves are often opaque. While some political leaders and scholars worry that the "coloring" of America is undermining the European cultural roots behind United States democracy, it is rather, this Panel believes, the contrasts between the aspirations of the American creed and persistent experiences of dramatic inequality that pose the largest threat to the country's civic fabric.

The tragedy is that these histories and their legacies are scarcely known outside the immediate communities which suffered dispossession and political discrimination. Too many educated Americans are almost entirely ignorant of the events that so profoundly shaped these inequalities. Few outside minority communities have more than a vague sense of the structured inequities some Americans encounter daily: in their search for jobs, homes, education; even in differential prices quoted for automobiles, credit, insurance. For many within a specific community, there is ignorance of their own history and that of others, often resulting in group isolation rather than a nuanced view of differences and similarities.

Scholars have been at work for decades recovering the history and topography of American inequalities. The study-dialogues we propose in this report can help the republic learn them—and understand their significance. But understanding is only the beginning of the dialogue. The essential next question for United States democracy is what citizens are willing to do to change the inequalities embedded in the national landscape. Where do we want to go as a society? How do citizens respond to the widening gap between rich and poor that now characterizes the United States trajectory? How do communities redress the experiences of prejudice and marginalization that are the legacy of our diversity histories? What can we learn from the creativities that marginalized communities exhibit as they support their members in the face of societal hostilities and incomprehensions?

RACE AS THE RAZOR EDGE OF DEMOCRACY

Of all the sources of unequal power in the United States, race is the razor that most brutally cuts and divides. W. E. B. Du Bois told us in 1903 that "the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line." Nearly one hundred years later, on the verge of becoming a multichromatic society, the United States has still not resolved the issue of color. Racial divides corrode the aspirations of this democracy, providing the most incisive evidence of our need to think in new ways about the role of collectivities—inherited, chosen, and imposed—within the larger society.

Michael Omi and Howard Winant observe in *Racial Formation in the United States* (1994) that this country is torn between contending impulses when addressing race: "There is a continuous temptation to think of race as an *essence*, as something fixed, concrete, and objective. And there is also an opposite temptation: to imagine race as a mere *illusion*, a purely ideological construct which some ideal non-racist order would eliminate."

Both these interpretations—the essentialist and the illusory—figure prominently, if contradictorily, in contemporary discourse. Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray's *The Bell Curve* (1994), which imagines race as a physical state with measurable cognitive consequences, was treated as a major publishing event when it appeared, instantly becoming a bestseller. But even as *The Bell Curve* suggests public policies which assume specific racial inequalities in perpetuity, public figures throughout the country are proclaiming that it is time to abandon race- (and gender-) conscious affirmative action programs in favor of color-blind public policies or "fairness."

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Despite their widespread acceptance in our popular discourse, neither essentialist nor color-blind conceptions of race can withstand serious scrutiny. The essentialist view is largely discounted by scientists, as we might readily anticipate when we recall that, according to traditional categorizing, "white" women in mixed relationships can and do give birth to "black" children, but the reverse is never true.

Biologists have concluded, after two centuries of determined effort to classify "races" in a pyramid that invariably placed Caucasians at the top, that the project was always analysis in the service of ideology. Stephen Jay Gould reminds us that differentiation among *Homo sapiens* is of rather recent origin (only tens of thousands of years old) and rather astonishingly small. "Although frequencies for different states of a gene differ among races," Gould notes in *The Mismeasure of Man* (1981), "we have found no 'race genes'—that is, states fixed in certain races and absent from all others." Other biologists have found that variations in blood type are far greater within a given group than between groups.

But if race is not a description of biological distinctions, that scarcely means it is an illusion. Americans are powerfully divided, not by biology, but by racialization, that specific form of thinking by which human differences such as color come to be seen as socially significant and determinative.

In American history, racialization has worked to associate skin pigmentation with inferiority, subordination, marginalization, and powerlessness. While societies have always classified and stigmatized outsiders, the concepts of "race" and "races" were not significantly differentiated from the related ideas of "heathen" and "savage" until Europeans first began the era of explorations, conquests and enslavements that organized the modern world. Historians have argued, in fact, that the concept of "race" came fully into its own only when large numbers of people eventually began to challenge the morality of slavery (Fields 1982). Decades of "scientific" studies

then proposed classifications that demonstrated the "natural" bases of "racial" hierarchies.

Far from describing objective reality, therefore, racial categories marshaled social prejudice to justify the appropriation of labor in contexts of slavery and subjugation that affected public, social, and domestic hierarchies. The appropriations were culturally rationalized first through religious and then through scientific discourses on the ordained nature of the imposed inferiority. The process of racialization continues to this day in, for example, the contemporary debate on welfare. The issue is often distorted as a problem of minority communities, when in fact 39 percent of welfare recipients are white.

With the elaboration of race as a concept, differences in skin color were used to classify people into categories that were deemed measures of a person's innate mental, behavioral, and psychological capacities. When Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo first described the American Indians in the early 1500s, he saw them as "naturally lazy and vicious, melancholic, cowardly, and in general a lying, shiftless people." American Indian women were categorized as "Squaws," a crude term of sexual reference. Similarly disparaging words appeared in the American lexicon to rationalize discrimination against African slaves in the 1700s, to demonize and demean those Mexicans and American Indians conquered during western territorial expansion in the nineteenth century, to stigmatize Irish, Italian, Polish, and Jewish immigrants in the 1890s and, in our own time, to incite panic about the hordes of illegal "aliens" clandestinely crossing the border from Mexico into the United States.

The constructed and malleable quality of the racial categories recognized in the United States becomes transparent as soon as we look to the experiences of those crossing borders from other societies to our own. Witness the consternation of the upper class Jamaican for whom skin color in her original country is a superfluous fact. On emigrating to the United States, she immediately becomes black—and subject to all the prejudicial associations attached to the category. The Chinese merchant, the Thai computer engineer, the Cambodian peasant, clearly separated by class and religion in their native countries, and easily distinguishable by national traits on their continent, in the United States become lumped together and marked by skin color, eye shape and hair texture as Asian and non-white. The power dynamics that underlie such erasures and imposed recategorization are evident too in the European creation of American Indians. The word Indian was invented to describe those conquered pre-Columbian populations that once lived in complex stratified societies. Calling all these populations "Indian" leveled the old orders of nobility, of lords and warrior castes, as well as the distinctions among nations, reducing all to the common status of a vanquished colonial subject.

Fallacious though these racial categories are as descriptions of any objective biological or social distinctions, this Panel believes it is delusional to imagine that we can simply eliminate by decree the consequences of the racial categories invented in this country. The patterned social relations created by these impositions have powerfully shaped memory and psyches on all sides of our color lines. Racial categories have placed specific peoples within imposed groups, erased—or in the case of gender, disrupted and reshaped—particularities within these groups and situated the groups in subordinate relations to the rest of the society. Even though many have managed to escape the starkest consequences of these United States color lines, the majority have not. Economically, persons of color are subjected still to subordinate housing, inferior schooling, marginal occupations and less adequate health care. Psychologically, United States persons of color, the marked bearers of "diversity, " are constantly aware that whatever their economic success, racialization imposes a form of marginalization and discrimination in a society that still defines "white" and "Euro-American" as norms.

Nor are the corrosive consequences of racialization restricted to communities of color. The asymmetrical relations created by racialization in the United States are manifest in thousands of different ways. Long centuries of racial domination established the American identity as "white," the negation of racial otherness. From politics to business to the governance systems of colleges and universities, normative institutions were those established by the "white community," which had no incentives to take account of other groups' preferences or traditions in establishing institutional practices and arrangements. These developments conferred myriad forms of white privilege which are invisible to most who enjoy them—but overwhelmingly apparent to all who are not white. Racial hierarchies thus formed economically stratified, gendered, and highly sexualized social relations of opposition and unease, anger and guilt, which beset us still, even when there is a wish to change them.

There has been much discussion in educational circles—liberal and conservative alike—that higher education needs to reinvent a core curriculum that will explore humanistic inheritances, traditions and aspirations. We on the American Commitments National Panel believe that the transformative aspirations of democracy and the legacies of race and racialization constitute a central theme in any curriculum for United States democratic and cultural pluralism. Until these juxtapositions are confronted widely and from multiple points of view, the country will lack the knowledge it needs to move forward towards the creation of an inclusive and just society.

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Adams Morgan Day—Multicultural Community in Washington, D.C.: In a city sharply divided along racial and class lines, the Adams Morgan neighborhood stands out for its extraordinary racial, cultural, and economic diversity. Located in the center of the nation's capital, Adams Morgan is home to Washington's growing Latino community, to African Americans and whites both affluent and poor, and to gays and lesbians; it receives immigrants and visitors from literally every part of the world. This picture taken at the annual Adams Morgan Day Festival captures the exuberance that is part of public experience in Adams Morgan.

In its racial, group, and class complexity, Adams Morgan turns the black-white binary of standard U.S. racial analysis into a multifaceted kaleidoscope. But if Adams Morgan represents a space of intercultural possibility in an American city, it also shows how much work is needed to turn such spaces into centers of connection and collaboration. Neighbors banded together to reclaim a once elegant park from drug dealers and make it a gathering ground for multiethnic community. But Latinos and Asian Americans in Adams Morgan often perceive themselves excluded from both the black and white power centers and negotiation that govern the nation's capital. Political tensions in 1992 between Latinos and the police led to multiracial urban disruptions in nearby Mount Pleasant which spilled over into Adams Morgan.

Chicana feminist Gloria Anzaldúa has written eloquently in both prose and poetry of the pain as well as the possibility of living in the kind of psychological border space that communities like Adams Morgan prefigure:

> To survive the Borderlands
> you must live *sin fronteras*
> be a crossroads.

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sin fronteras—without borders

CHAPTER FIVE

DIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY

Borderlands are physically present wherever two or more cultures edge each other, where people of different races occupy the same territory, where under, lower, middle and upper classes touch, where the space between two individuals shrinks with intimacy.

—Gloria Anzaldúa

We have stressed the invidious discriminations and marginalizations that pattern diversity in United States society because they comprise for many Americans framing narratives with which the country's democratic aspirations must come to terms. The nation cannot simply celebrate diversity; it must recognize and redress the costs exacted for identification with particular forms of diversity.

Yet it is equally important to recognize that the disparate histories and legacies that comprise United States diversity are constructive, not merely divisive. In particular, they have created multiple communities of identification and affiliation which have been and continue to be a richly transformative resource for the renewal of United States democracy. As the academy works to cultivate a fuller understanding of the histories that shape this society, it must also foster a dialogue about the ways multiple United States cultures and communities can engage one another in a shared commitment to fulfill the ethical and human promise of the American creed.

We recognize, of course, that this view of our multiple cultures and communities runs counter to a widespread fear that cultural diversity will beget balkanization, the "disuniting of America." These fears overlook, this Panel believes, the generative role that disparate cultural communities play both for the individual and for the body politic.

If we examine our personal and societal histories we see that our democracy draws strength, humanity, and continual impetus for democratic renewal from the vitality and the demands of its diverse and intersecting communities. Our personal social reality is that each of us develops a sense of self and selfhood in small communities, in networks of families, friends, neighbors, colleagues. As human beings, each of us must have a place, traditions, webs of associations to which we centrally and vitally belong, where we are readily recognized, where we do not have to explain each aspect of our selves, our histories, our idiosyncrasies, our standpoints. These particular communities of affiliation, whether ethnic, religious, or based on other connections, guide our vision and form our values. They introduce us to mu-

tuality, obligation, and justice—or their absence—as concrete experiences rather than as abstract ideas.

Communities play this role in society, a role so profound that without them, there is neither meaning nor understanding. Those communities that coalesce around marginalized difference assume an additional responsibility. They both provide the nurturance and support characteristic of all communities and also create necessary safe spaces. Lesbians, gays and bisexuals, whose sexual feelings and behavior many in the larger society view as a threat, fight discrimination and prejudice by creating communities of affection. African Americans eager to save their communities from annihilation have extended history so that it does not begin with their dehumanization as slaves bound for the Americas, but in African societies of complexity and richness. Chicanas have reached back to 1519 to identify the union of Doña Marina, a Mayan noblewoman, with Hernán Cortés as the historical moment that gave birth to *mestizaje*, that social and cultural mixing of European and American Indian which made a new kind of people.

As human beings, each of us must have a place, traditions, webs of associations to which we centrally and vitally belong, where we are readily recognized, where we do not have to explain each aspect of our selves, our histories, our idiosyncrasies, our standpoints.

Attachment to and identification with one's affectional, racial or ethnic community is not a flight from the larger American community and from those common aspirations that bind us as a republic. On the contrary, the widespread search for roots and ancestry in this country is a desire to recuperate and restore to history those experiences of communion that once attached to kith and kin. Belonging to particular communities is an intrinsic part of our American heritage. If this country's many communities of affiliation were thus understood and valued, our notions of difference might then come to reflect more clearly the complexity of the American mosaic.

But community is not experienced primarily in the form of easily definable and essentially homogeneous groups. Recognizing the human significance of our multiple United States communities does not drive us to a conception of society as a federation of balkanized cultures. Often what may look to outsiders like a homogeneous group—Jews, Japanese Americans, the Christian Right—is itself richly and sometimes unsettlingly diverse. Boundaries are permeable and the differences within are complex. While individuals may think of themselves as part of a distinct community, they are often aware that the larger identification in which they find comfort, purpose and pride is made up of diversities with which they may or may not identify.

Moreover, very few of us belong to only one community. The same complexity that characterizes particular communities also exists within each of us as individuals. In refusing to separate her gender from her race, Patricia Hill Collins (1990) reminds us that we are "both/and." This is yet another dimension of communality that requires exploration within the academy and within society. This "diversity within" can enhance our capacities to

cross boundaries, sustain common commitments, and expand our understanding when we fully attend to the intricate negotiations necessary in the face of intersecting differences. But these capacities are not easily or automatically developed. The experiences and arts of "border crossings" are topics that deserve much fuller exploration.

Turned in yet another way, the role of communities in the United States has a negative side. This too requires a more searching engagement, both on campus and in the larger society. The two criteria for a healthy community, Dewey has noted, are the number and variety of interests that hold it together, and its relationship to other communities (1960). According to this definition, many of our communities are healthy centers of cultural sharing and mutual support as well as places of empowerment. But still others are dysfunctional, sheltering attitudes and behaviors destructive to the participants and often to the larger society. Consider, for example, the Skinheads, who find community in acts of violence towards gays and Jews. Such groups serve as breeding grounds for the worst kind of intolerance.

Dysfunctional groups are a reflection, in microcosm, of the larger problem of diversity in this nation. Just as a single community degenerates into destructiveness, so also diversity within the larger entity can become a source of inequity and injustice, when some groups abrogate to themselves the position of the "one," and relegate the rest to that of disadvantaged and inferior "others." It is precisely this process of disequilibrium that has vitiated our democracy in the past and which threatens to do so again now, in the contemporary manifestation of "culture wars." Therefore, we bring this report to a close with a sketch of a new vision of the communalities that can emerge from the generative intersections of democracy and diversity. The vision is by its very nature utopian. It is deliberately a sketch, not a blueprint. But we propose it here as a direction our campus and community study-dialogues can fruitfully explore.

A NEW VISION

We propose, then, that it is time to explore as a people a vision of democracy which is not so much new as it is a recommitment to the aspirations inherent in the American creed, ideals that we have always held but which must be rethought continually in the face of new challenges. We need to recognize more fully and more effectively the complexities and limitations of freedom in a society where the individual simultaneously stands alone and connects and reconnects with others. We are calling for, in effect, a vision of relational pluralism where freedom means that the individual and society are inextricably linked in a range of possibilities and limitations.

In this vision, we recognize that each of us belongs to multiple communities, so that connections both intersect and frequently contradict. It is when the frictions generated by the contradictions within and among

groups arise that both the society and the individual must be ready to respond democratically. The society calls upon those political structures that already exist, and when they fail, recreates them or creates new structures. But individuals must be educated too, in the principles, knowledge, and capacities that support the processes of democratic community-building. These capacities include the arts necessary to interact with those who differ from us with what might be called (once this word is stripped of its more mundane and superficial connotations) democratic *manners*.

In this vision of relational pluralism, each person must be prepared to venture out of the comfort zone of one community into the "contact zone."

Walt Whitman associated manners with "the highest forms of interaction" among people. The Latin word for manners is "mos," from which comes our word, "mores." Democratic mores demand democratic manners. The English word "manners" itself is derived from the Latin word that means hand, "manus." The use of the handshake is a useful metaphor for manners in general. To extend the hand for a handshake is a necessity in some cultures, an oddity or an offense in others. Citizens of a diverse democracy need to know whether, when, and how to shake hands. That is, they need to be adept in those practices and dispositions—*manners*—toward others that enable them to discharge their duties as neighbors, within and across communities.

In this vision of relational pluralism, each person must be prepared to venture out of the comfort zone of one community into what all too often nowadays is like the area Mary Louise Pratt (1990) has, at the level of international encounters, called the "contact zone…the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations." While contact zones have historically been spheres of inequity and coercion, our task in a democracy is to turn these borderlands into spaces of mutuality, respectful encounters, and collaborative problem-solving. Developing and learning the democratic manners that can transform "contact zones" is essential to the future of our society. Only insofar as we become adept at negotiating differences within and among our American circles can the commonwealth not only embrace its complexity, but also understand that doing so is a necessity.

Democratic communality envisioned in this way is not ethnocentric. Rather, ours is a nation of many communities which function as multiple and overlapping circles linked by their citizenship, their aspiration to democratic ideals, and their pursuit of happiness within those ideals. In this vision, the marker for ethnic identity is just that: a marker, a modifier, an adjective. The Chinese American, the Italian American, the Jewish American, the African American, then, are kinds of Americans, the bearers of disparate legacies but respectful of and even ready to learn from one another's traditions and wisdom. Differences are no longer deficits, but rather resources to build upon together, or contradictions to be negotiated.

Dialogue becomes absolutely critical to this generative, relational democracy, and the civic culture becomes not simply a political process, or a marketplace of competing interests, but rather one that seeks deliberatively to reflect and address the aspirations, needs, and realities of all of its citizens. Democratic manners develop as we engage in the difficult dialogues between disparate community ideals and identify points of intersection in community experiences, aspirations, needs, successes, and failures. In this vision, we recognize that engagement across differences is inherent in the moral democratic creed upon which this nation was founded. We embrace, rather than reject, the differences that were unacknowledged, deliberately ignored and suppressed, or not yet present at the founding of this nation. In so doing, we free the vision of the founders from a limited ethnocentrism that belied their lofty aspirations from the beginning.

Our task for the third centennial of this nation is to learn about the full range of American peoples, to reengage, across our communities, the meaning and potential of American principles and to develop new forms of democratic manners. We must seek social equality and respect for the individual within the community; we must also recognize the complexity of the nation and seek social equality and respect for the variety of communities within the nation.

Our pluralism challenges every American to strive to understand the values, memories, and mementos of each community, to hear the voices of the powerless and the powerful, and everyone in between, with equal resonance, and to understand that we belong to multiple communities simultaneously. As we ignite anew the republic's democratic creed and the ideals it shapes of a just society, and try to do so for the diverse citizenry of the contemporary United States, we must develop a deeper understanding of communities. Ultimately, understanding communities will recast our conceptions of the individual, so that we come to see individuals as formed in, attached to, and supported by communities—rather than as purely autonomous beings. We are, after all, a people bound together by common problems to be solved. We must move toward an understanding of community intersections, of profound interdependence, and of our continuing need for one another's experiences and contributions.

This is the opportunity and the challenge that diversity in our democracy presents to us. It points us toward a level ground on which to meet, a meeting ground on which to speak, a fertile ground on which to plant and reap.

We must move toward an understanding of community intersections, of profound interdependence, and of our continuing need for one another's experiences and contributions.

Diversity and College Learning: The dialogue about campus diversity often presupposes a straightforward choice between assimilation and balkanization. Either minority students assimilate to a single, encompassing culture in which differences disappear, the arguments seem to suggest, or the campus becomes a collection of self-segregated groups whose separation from one another defeats the purpose of fostering diversity.

In two separately published reports, *Liberal Learning and the Arts of Connection for the New Academy* (forthcoming) and *American Pluralism and the College Curriculum* (1995), AAC&U's American Commitments initiative challenges this dichotomy, calling for education that is "both/and." In a world that is multicultural and multiperspectival, an education of quality helps students experience, comprehend, and develop the possibilities in diversity and pluralism.

Higher education should help students explore the sources and complexities of their own identities, the American Commitments reports propose. Such exploration is a traditional and legitimate goal of college learning. But students should also be expected to discover and engage, experientially and conceptually, the histories and perspectives of others. Students should study, at a sophisticated level, the democratic aspirations, principles, and histories that frame the contemporary context for negotiating difference. And they should practice, throughout their education, arts of translation, negotiation, and reconceptualization.

The goal, as the present report proposes, is to educate graduates who will become active participants in the American narrative without the false hope of easy resolution, but with the sustained commitment to work toward a society in which democratic aspirations become democratic justice, and diversity becomes a means of forging deeper unity.

(Photo: Chatham College students, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.)

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RECOMMENDATIONS

HIGHER EDUCATION'S DOUBLE OBLIGATION

Education...like democracy,
is always in the making,
forever incomplete, founded in possibilities.
—Maxine Greene

Throughout this report, we have urged our colleagues in the higher education community to initiate a new era of broad-based learning and inclusive dialogue about the United States as a democracy both enacted and tested through its diverse communities.

Our common goals, we repeat, should be to deepen public and campus knowledge of United States diversity histories, to reengage with democratic aspirations as a moral compass for this country's intersecting communities, and to commit ourselves with new seriousness—as educators and as citizens—to the still-elusive goal of meaningful equality for every American.

How do we address these goals in practice? We propose that our campuses acknowledge a double obligation:

1. To create new opportunities—which we term "American Commitments Community Seminars"—for both *public and campus learning* about the United States as a diverse democracy; and

2. To commit our institutions to the task of making our campuses *inclusive educational environments* in which all participants are equally welcome, equally valued, and equally heard.

For both the public and the campus dimensions of this work, we emphasize three fundamental commitments: (a) the strengthening of both campus and public capacity to hear and nourish different voices; (b) an engagement in conversations of respect with hitherto excluded and/or marginalized peoples on a leveled meeting ground in which all participate as equals; and (c) a commitment to ask how we as intelligent and caring citizens not only talk but also walk the challenge of the American experiment with pluralist democracy.

In the final sections of this report, we explore ways that colleges and universities can translate these obligations and commitments into designs for a new generation of public and campus learning.

PUBLIC AND CAMPUS LEARNING: AMERICAN COMMITMENTS COMMUNITY SEMINARS

As educators, we are mindful that the concept of life-long learning applies not just to individuals but to educational institutions and to the nation itself. Dewey (1963a) taught that the aim of life-long learning is to foster our capacity to envision a more just society and to increase justice in our daily private and public lives. This teaching holds rich meaning for the contemporary role of colleges and universities in the larger society. Today, the United States is experiencing a defining moment in its own growth and maturity as a pluralistic society. This society as a whole confronts a new learning challenge that requires all of us to unlearn previous ways of thinking about and living with one another and to newly learn more productive and generative ways of connecting across our diversities.

In this context, our educational institutions have an extraordinary opportunity and we believe an obligation to create what Maxine Greene (1988) has called "an authentic public space: a space of dialogue and possibility." The dialogue that should take place in such spaces, Greene suggests, requires "a special form of critical thinking...a powerful vision and reflection born of an awareness of a world lived in common with others."

This Panel recommends that our 3,300 campuses literally make themselves such "authentic public spaces," providing a physical forum for understanding of both diversity and democracy to connect and enlarge. Our campuses have already made a commitment to diversity, intellectual and societal. Let us now make a further commitment to create common meeting grounds for public learning about the strengths and failures that characterize United States diversity and for public dialogue about the enlargement of democratic vision to encompass a richer range of American possibilities.

In proposing this vision of our campuses as a "meeting ground" for American pluralism, we do not suggest that participants come together to determine what "we" hold in common. Such efforts are too often experienced as silencing, or exclusionary by those whom the dialogue most needs to hear. Rather we propose that what we call "Community Seminars" should bring participants together as learners: ready to study, to discuss, to reconceive—and in the doing, to enlarge one another's visions of American democracy for all who live here.

The range of new learning that can be addressed through such public and campus study-dialogues is extensive. This entire report sketches a curriculum for community learning, and we hope that colleges and universities will use these pages as a point of departure for study and dialogue.

But of course, these pages are only a point of departure. Community Seminars should also address diversity histories, examining the experiences of and intersections among specific groups within the region served by the college or university, building knowledge of those who are there but neither seen nor heard. Community Seminars can also be thematic: studying, in ways that are meaningful to the participants, issues of race, ethnicity, class, gender roles, religion, immigration, poverty, economic opportunity, social power and the rich range of connections among such topics.

Ideally, the Community Seminars should engage issues of principle: equality, opportunity, recognition, belonging, tolerance, reciprocity, conscience, justice, participatory democracy and again, the connections among such topics. What have these values meant in our experience? What might they mean in communities yet to be created?

And surely these Community Seminars should address daily experience: the ways that participants now respond to unsettling difference; the ways we might more fruitfully respond to the varieties of difference that people our worlds.

Whatever the organization of themes and content, we encourage every such Community Seminar to address the challenges and possibilities of intersecting American communities, seeking to envision together a country that is neither homogenous nor balkanized but richly and variously supportive of all its communities and all its citizens.

As they provide leadership for new learning about diversity, democracy and community in American life, we suggest that college and university leaders hold in mind the following precepts:

This Panel recommends that our 3,300 campuses literally make themselves "authentic public spaces."

1. **Begin at home.** Engage in preliminary study-dialogues involving faculty, staff and students. Involve scholars and other knowledgeable leaders who can help shape new learning about the complexity of United States communities. Use these early discussions to develop preliminary framings of diversity and democracy questions that are especially significant given the particular missions and commitments of the campus, discover the knowledge bases and community resources available to explore the questions and establish a feasible plan for undertaking cooperative efforts with members of the larger community.

2. **Identify and work with a range of community partners.** Campus leaders should work collaboratively with designated "public" colleagues to shape mutually acceptable topical agendas for the Community Seminars that illuminate the histories, aspirations, and democratic potentials especially significant to community participants. The range of partners and the quality of the planning should signal a genuine commitment to inclusion and to reciprocity. Those with concerns about diversity ought to be as welcome at the table as those who seek to enlarge public understanding of diversity. The point of democratic dialogue is to work through difference, not to suppress it.

3. **Recognize and support the need for new learning.** We have argued throughout this report that, to move forward as a democracy, Americans need new knowledge, a fuller understanding of the histories that stand behind contemporary debates, a fuller recognition of the diverse peoples who are too readily lumped together in designated, but artificial, "groups." The goal for these recommended Community Seminars is not simply to discuss contentious issues, but rather to learn parts of the American past that were not taught or insufficiently explored in our schools and colleges. Through such study, we can enlarge and enrich everyone's understanding of the contexts and historical asymmetries out of which contested issues and societal problems have emerged.

4. **Take time to design effective and mutually respectful seminar practices.** Diverse participation and respectful exchange among participants is just as important to the proposals offered here as new content and deepened knowledge. So too is space for genuine difference and the conflict that can accompany it. We suggest, therefore, that campus and community planners work extensively with their constituencies to shape an effective context for the Community Seminars, a context that expresses planners' interest in revitalizing the traditions of deliberative democracy. Planning should address ground rules for study and dialogue, dissent, and reconsideration. Leaders should know how to acknowledge strong feelings, work through conflict, and turn confrontations into opportunities for reconsideration and deeper understanding.

5. **Resist false dichotomies; embrace both complexity and possibility.** In shaping the seminar content, campus and community leaders should agree to resist, for the duration of the activity, both the temptation to simply celebrate diversity and the temptation to view American pluralism in dualistic polarities: unity-balkanization; integration-separation; black-white; just-unjust; equal-unequal; and the like. This is a complex country, marked by stunning achievements, destructive failures, and the entire range of experiences in between. We propose that the seminars focus on generative complexities rather than polarizing oppositions. Let colleges and universities create 3,300 points of resistance to the simplistic soundbites that now pass for public dialogue.

6. **Make study-dialogue a valued town-gown tradition.** Over time, the traditions of study and dialogue recommended here ought to become a local resource. Presidents can shape Community Seminars as retreats for trustees. Businesses can establish them as learning communities for their employees. Campuses can incorporate them in open or inexpensive programs of continuing education, as well as the curriculum and co-curriculum. Neighboring institutions may begin to work together, locally, regionally, even nationally, to extend the range and impact both of the topics discussed and of the ways in which the discussion is framed. If we do our work well, the concept of the campus as a meeting ground for community learning and productive dialogue about important issues will take root, enriching and enlarging public understanding of the educational mission of colleges and universities in a democratic society.

CREATING INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Higher education can support these forms of public learning with integrity, of course, only if our campuses are themselves truly inclusive of—and engaged in learning through—diverse perspectives and diverse peoples. United States colleges and universities, this Panel believes, have extensive work to do to create educational communities that in their missions and intellectual, curricular, and organizational framings reflect the complexity of our intersecting circles or the possibilities of the democratic quest. To move forward in this work, we must therefore resist efforts to impose upon our campuses premises or decisions that would undo higher education's commitment to reverse the legacies of segregation and make our institutions effectively inclusive. Few of our campuses have yet managed to provide a full experience of equity for students of every background. Yet the effort to do so is basic to fulfillment of their intellectual mission. To be superb, each community of learners must—in ways appropriate to its mission—challenge the human tendency for like to seek mainly like, and thereby constrain the sum of possible wisdom. Diversity within a community makes easy acceptance of any particular assertion less likely—and so stretches and enlarges that question for understanding, which is the university's ultimate obligation.

Four separate reports from this Panel address different aspects of the diversity and educational challenges confronting American higher education. These reports make specific recommendations about goals for liberal learning in a diverse democracy, and about curricular, pedagogical, and institutional practices that establish diversity as a resource for excellence in American higher education. Collectively, they build on insights and directions already emerging from our campuses, suggesting ways that we can recognize and nurture an educational renaissance already in the making.

We bring this report to a close with an overview of the broad themes addressed in these separate Panel reports:

1. **Recognize American campuses as meeting grounds for American pluralism.** We must see ourselves as a common meeting ground for national learning about diversity. We conceptualize this "meeting ground" not around shared perspectives, but around agreement to freely come together to study and discuss and enlarge the meaning of American democracy. Our 3,300 campuses can and should provide a physical forum for the national narrative to enlarge.

2. **Engage the centrality of diversity in higher education's responsibilities to democracy.** We must take the issues of diversity seriously in order to create educational communities that in their missions and intellectual, curricular, and organizational framings reflect the complexity of the

democratic narrative and the obligation to create environments in which all participants are equally welcome, equally valued, and equally heard. A commitment to critical engagement with diversity cannot be successfully taught if it is not successfully modeled in our ways of being with one another.

3. **Continue and extend our commitment to help students find their own sources and expressions of self and voice.** This requires that we actively work against the dichotomies of mind and of politics that allow students to be defined stereotypically as unidimensional rather than multidimensional. It requires that we assist students in comprehending the sources of their own identities and understandings and support them in developing the disposition and the capacity to learn from the insights and experiences of other traditions.

4. **Transform the curriculum so that it acknowledges and prepares students for the multiplicity of contemporary society.** Every institution should actively engage in curricular change so that we enrich the curricular narrative with which our students engage. In this perspective, the multidimensionality of the curriculum is necessary to help students understand themselves and their peers, their communities of affiliation, the American society, and the complexities of a multicultural society, at home and abroad.

5. **Learn how to foster human capacities supportive of a diverse democracy.** With new levels of awareness and purpose, campuses must take on the serious task of exploring and fostering the capacities of associated living, the democratic manners that are essential to the continuous renewal and extension of democratic and cultural pluralism. We must do this in the recognition that we are all learning together and that no one yet knows how to create polities marked by full equality and genuine respectfulness across difference. Yet these capacities are fundamental to the learner as student and to the learner as citizen.

6. **Confront contradictions and discover their possibilities.** We must not be afraid to help our students and our communities confront the contradictions of their own histories and the history of the American republic. Only through the realization of our historical and present tensions can we hope to nurture the development of individuals who will become active participants in the American narrative without the false hope of easy resolution, but with the sustained commitment to work toward a society in which democratic aspirations become democratic justice, and diversity becomes a means of forging a deeper unity.

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Eileen O'Brien of Policy Studies Associates, Inc., in Washington, D.C., compiled the data in the foreword on the educational participation and attainment of various ethnic groups.

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